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THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 141 MARCH 2012

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2012 WINTER NAMM REPORT

UPLIGHTING DONE RIGHT

UPGRADE YOUR (GEAR) IMAGE

TIPS FOR BETTER SETUPS

BEING A PRODUCTION COMPANY

LASER DANGER: HORROR OR HYPE?

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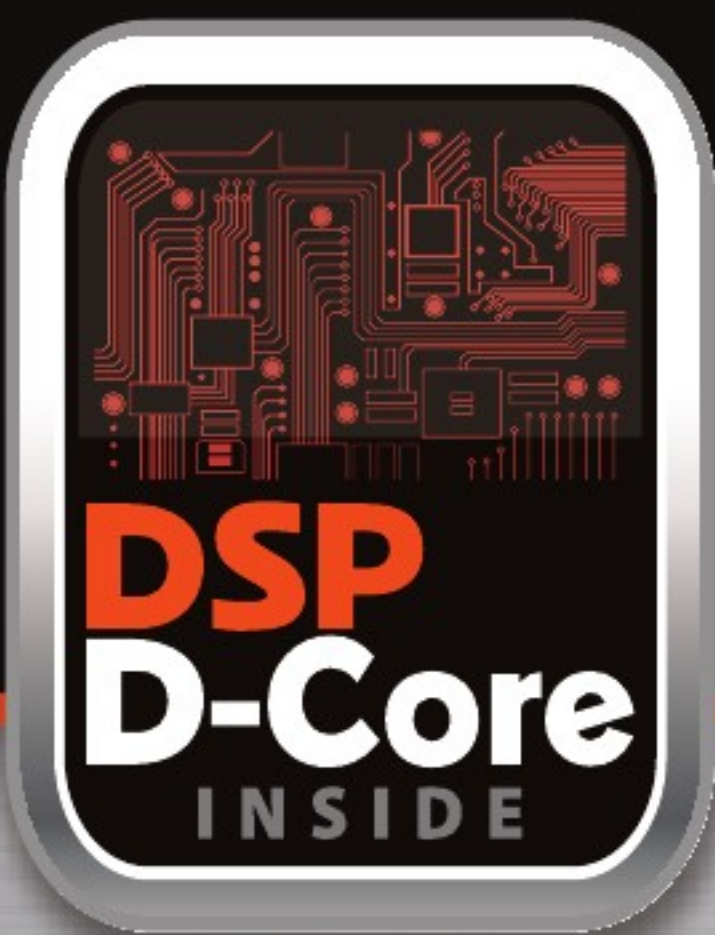
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So to you, and all those who put in the effort, the time, and the dedication it takes to achieve real and lasting success, you have our admiration and our support. We'll see you at the gig.

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Our yearly focus on gear is upon us, and once again, we have no shortage of ways to look at that important aspect of what DJs do....

There's the wide-angle view afforded us by gear editor Jake Feldman, as he reports on the latest NAMM show (read: gear extravaganza and equipment love-fest), as well as his experience in running the production unit of Mobile Beat's in-house DJ company.

Then we zero in, with Stu Chisholm breaking down the facts (and just the facts) on laser use and safety. On the current craze on uplighting, Michael Edwards pulls no punches in discussing the need for a professional approach. Rich McCoy, our newest gear-related columnist (new to us, that is; he brings over four decades of engineering and entertainment experience to bear) offers some possibilities for configuring your digital DJ setup. And, speaking of setups, Jim Weisz shares some gig-tested tips on more efficient packing, transport, load-in/out and more. John Stiernberg even looks at how your gear can influence your prospective clients' perceptions of you.

Thinking of your performances and business as the functioning of a "well-oiled machine," we also offer some ideas for improving many aspects of your DJ enterprise:

Ric Hansen shows how to work the subcontracting angle with five essential tips. Jeffrey Gitomer talks about an often-overlooked key to training. Jay Levinson reveals the guerrilla approach to "economizing." Using your environment and the people in it to improvise your way to a successful gig is Rob Johnson's topic this time around. Geoff Short also provides ample advice on how to keep the show going, no matter what disaster might come.

Focusing in on people, we talk to Robbie Britton, the driving force behind the thriving ArmDJs conference. We also profile Ryan Kellinghaus and get his unique perspective on youth gigs—from the vantage points of both DJ and educator. Other people-perspectives come from Mike Ryan, on turning the "spotlight" from yourself to the real stars of your show: your clients and their guests; and from Arnoldo Offerman, who shares out of his in-depth photography experience on how to work happily beside your fellow party vendor who's there to capture the moments that you are helping to create. DJ Coach Paul Kida gets some feedback from other vendors on how they see DJs, in a very eye-opening report. And on a tragic note, Rick Ellis pays tribute to a diva recently gone before her time, the incomparable Whitney Houston.

In my hometown of Rochester, New York, we enjoy many great cultural institutions, including the National Museum of Play. A few years back, along with other more colorful and flashy contenders, they inducted the humble cardboard box into their Toy Hall of Fame. It was an acknowledgement of the sheer creativity we have as children, which allows us to create whole worlds out of things as simple as processed paper products. Jason Weldon wraps this issue with a valuable reminder that all the best gear, and all the slickest approaches can't help us "think outside the box" if we don't even know what's in our boxes to begin with. So it's time to gear yourself up for some serious DJ business and skill-building...and Mobile Beat is here to help!

Dan Walsh, Editor-In-Chief

Mobile Beat

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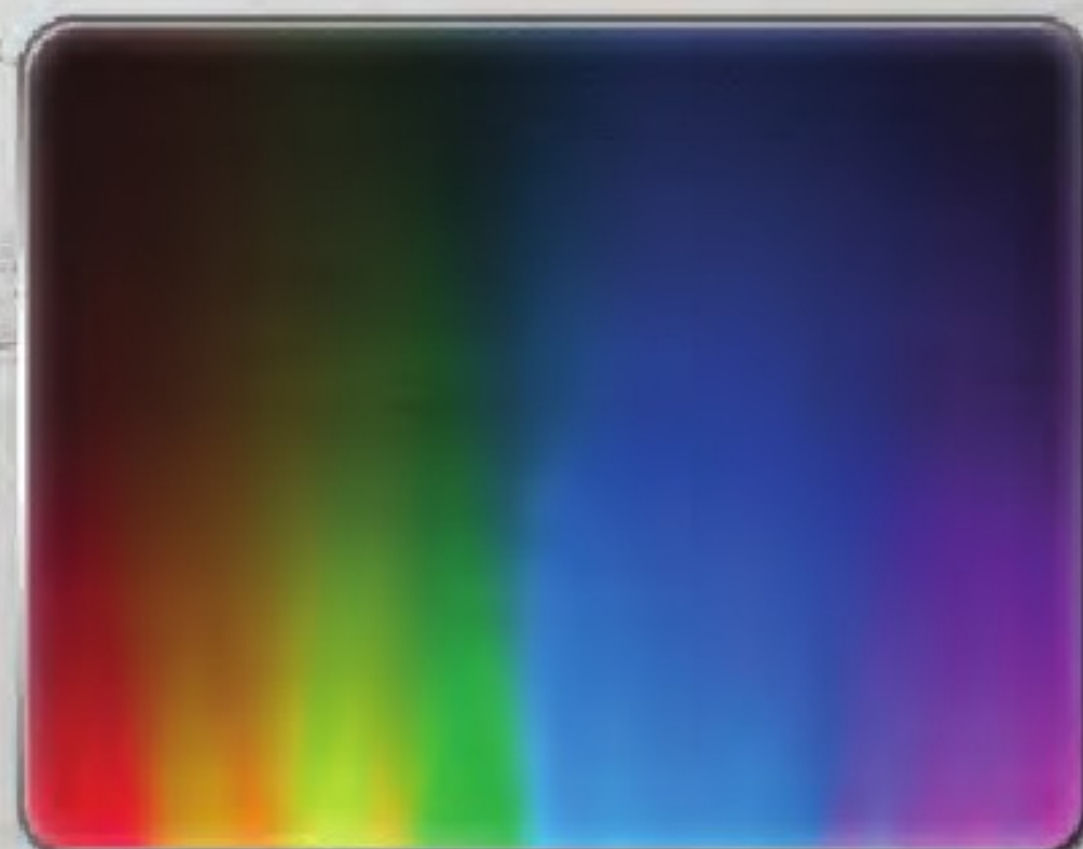
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DJs Convene Up North

The 2012 Canadian DJ Show is taking place March 17 and 18 at the Doubletree by Hilton Toronto Airport.

The goal of this new annual event is to provide information, techniques, tips and tricks to the professional club and mobile DJ industry, and generate interest in these professions from young up and coming music enthusiasts. Eighteen high-powered presenters have been lined up, as of press time. The show will feature booths from DJ and entertainment industry manufacturers and service providers—everything from CD players and mixers to leading-edge DJ technology and accessories.

The general show schedule is as follows:

- March 17th - Seminars & Training
- March 18th - Exhibits, Seminars & Training

For more information, or to register, go to www.cdjshow.com



Mobile Beat Text Club Rewards DJs

There's still time to get rewarded for simply communicating. Simply text MobileBeat to 58203 to join the Mobile Beat Text Club. Debuting in February at MBLV16, this new text club provides a way for DJs to tap into the power of smartphone marketing, while also getting some nice rewards.

The smartphone is the direct gateway to communication with the masses today, and will only keep on growing. Direct marketing to a target audience has never been more important. Don't email; don't post it on Facebook...TEXT IT directly to their palms. Join *Mobile Beat* as we share the power of Text Message Marketing: the benefit of an increased response rate and an affordable way to build a data base of contact information that gets results...and also win prizes during the process!

Customer Service Guide Published

Customer service is more important for businesses today than ever before—especially with the advent of tweeting every complaint under the sun. A recent study by Consumer Reports found that two in three consumers have walked out of a business because of poor customer service.

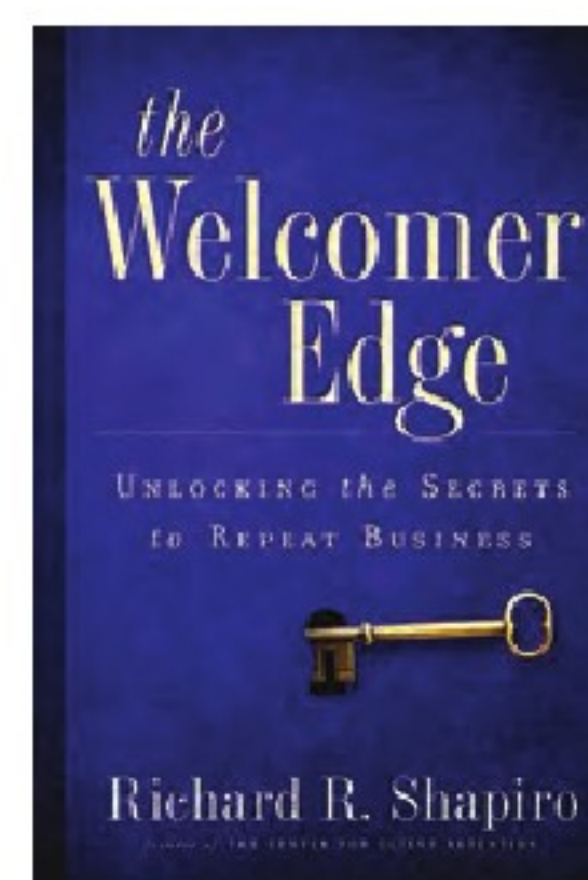
In his new book, *The Welcomer Edge: Unlocking the Secrets to Repeat Business* (Vantage Point Books), customer relationship management expert Richard R. Shapiro details how businesses can improve their customer service—and boost their profits.

The principles outlined in *The Welcomer Edge* can be applied to businesses large and small, and they also apply to almost any interaction, from calling a contact center for information to registering a complaint or even making a purchase online.

Shapiro describes four different types of employees:

"Welcomers" are associates who draw new customers to a business and keep them. Welcomers can create a relationship that lasts a lifetime. "Robots" are staff who just go through the motions in their customer interactions and do not understand the need to make a personal connection. "Indifferent" employees overtly communicate that they really do not care whether you are a customer or not. They almost never say "hello" and certainly do not say "thank you." "Hostiles" are people who do not want to be at their jobs and make it abundantly obvious. To increase customer satisfaction and repeat business, companies should hire more "welcomers" and try to train "robots" to act and think like "welcomers." *The Welcomer Edge* provides a guide on achieving this transition.

About the author: Richard Shapiro is the founder and president of The Center for Client Retention (TCFCR), which provides research, training and consulting services to Fortune 500 corporations on how to improve the customer experience. Before founding TCFCR, Shapiro was with ADP for eighteen years, where in his last role, he was Vice President of Customer Satisfaction and Client Retention. To learn more, visit The Center For Client Retention at www.tcfc.com.



DJUniversity

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Among the latest articles at DJ University, you will find :

4 Tips to Avoid Fixture Malfunction

By Max Morgan, CHAUVET Technical Manager

Technical equipment can malfunction. There, I said it, but unfortunately it's just the way it goes. What's even more unfortunate? When the malfunction happens at the most inopportune time, like when you're in the middle of a gig and you can't do much about it. Read on to recognize the different types of malfunctions and what the potential causes could be...

For the rest of this, and other great articles, go to www.mobilebeat.com/dj-university



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MegaSeg Rolls Out Improvements for Mac-Using DJs

Fidelity Media, creators of MegaSeg, the DJ and broadcast automation system made exclusively for Mac, today announced the availability of MegaSeg 5.8 DJ and Pro Editions. The free update for MegaSeg 5 users delivers over 120 improvements in all areas of the app, including new MIDI presets for the VMS2 and VMS4 controllers from American Audio,

better cover art support, sharper text and interface refinements, bottom pinned info popups, smoother Wave Mixer cueing and scratching, fader-independent Automatic Gain Control, faster iTunes playlist access, expanded drag-n-drop support, lower latency mic play-thru, as well as various improvements to Events, Scheduler, Hot Keys, Request List, Rules, Library Tools, Video, Streaming, Logging, Syncing, and a revised User's Guide.

MegaSeg 5.8 Highlights:

- New MIDI presets for American Audio's VMS2 and VMS4 controllers,

with options for creating multiple custom presets, new looping and control functions, and support for high-res jog wheels.

- New fader-independent Auto Volume Control function.
- Smoother multi-touch Wave Viewer for visual beatmixing.
- iTunes acquired album artwork is fully supported.
- Sharper interface text, and refined list headers and scrollbars.
- Wider red play marks and edge-pinned track info popups.
- Decks support direct Finder file drops and other drag-n-drop improvements.
- iTunes playlists open faster, supports multi-selection, type-to-select, and has a refresh button.
- Revised User's Guide with new info, screenshots, and concise examples.
- Lower latency Mic Play-Thru with faster volume ducking.
- Hot Key Sound Effects adds a "Same as Next Song (Preview)" output option.
- Request List notes can be edited and supports multiple selection.
- New Library Tools function to convert artist name order.
- Stream playback optimized on OS X Lion.



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Ultraviolet Honor

One of the highest compliments a manufacturer can receive is to have its products used by its peers. American DJ was recently granted such an honor when its UVLED Bar 16 light fixtures were chosen to read the UV signatures on attendee badges at the Winter NAMM Show in Anaheim, California, the largest trade show in the industry.

The bright ultraviolet light generated by the UVLED Bar 16 has a multitude of club and performance uses, and its reliability both as a light effect and a UV card reader is what prompted the organizers behind NAMM to choose the UVLED Bar 16 as the show's UV signature reader. The ultraviolet bars were installed above all entrances to read the UV signatures on the badges of show attendees, bathing the doorways in a cool indigo light and adding an extra level

of security at the trade show.

The unit's 16 1-watt LEDs produce an intense black-light that not only reads UV signatures, but can also wash over a wide area, thanks to its unique oval-shaped 10-degree vertical and 40-degree horizontal beam angle, which make it a great club light for setting a blue mood for a night on the dance floor. It's also an ideal choice

for stage performances, theatrical productions and any type of special effects lighting, including retail displays.

The UVLED Bar 16 features a dual bracket to facilitate multiple applications. The fixture can be mounted virtually anywhere in any position, including the floor, thanks to the dual bracket's ability to become a floor stand, which allows the light to be placed on the ground for spectacular black-light uplighting and wall-washing effects.

The American DJ UVLED Bar 16 is 12.5" x 2.5" x 7" and weighs 5 lbs. It includes a locking IEC power plug, a convenient on/off switch on the back and a 3-button rear-panel DMX display. The MSRP is \$399.99.

For a YouTube video of the UVLED Bar 16, click http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RQwhRYX7_M

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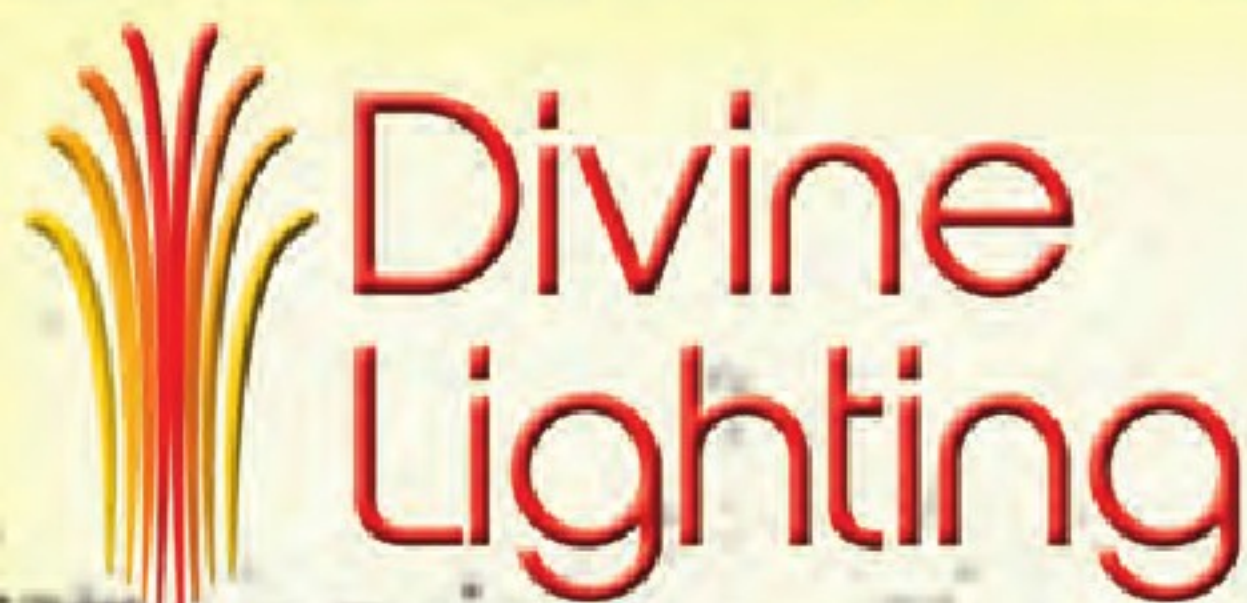


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Vocal Preservation

CARING FOR AN INDISPENSABLE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT

BY STU CHISHOLM •

Although it might seem like we're all one big, happy family, we writers here at Mobile Beat don't always agree with each other. In fact, one of the very first pieces of mine published here expressed an opposing view to something I'd read on these pages. It doesn't happen often, because our people really know their stuff!

But it has happened again, and this time the topic is on how to best care for your voice, that one thing a DJ can't do without.

In the December 2011 issue, my fellow scribe and DJ extraordinaire, Arnoldo Offerman, shared his advice on voice care, and what he said was spot on. Yet as I read it, I kept looking for the one sentence that never appeared...

WISDOM FROM ON HIGH

It was during the Mobile Beat Summer Show in Cleveland back in 1999 that I tagged-along with several DJ revelers to explore that fair city's legendary entertainment district known as "The Flats." As so often happens, we ended up in an extremely loud bar where even casual conversation required yelling at the top of our lungs. As one might expect, the next day my voice was shot. It took several days to recover.

I contacted a friend to ask him for some advice. His name is Barry Carl, and he's uniquely qualified to speak on the topic, as he was the legendary bass man for the a cappella group, Rockapella, best known for "Where In The World Is Carmen Sandiego" and various Folger's coffee commercials. When I explained what happened, his first bit of advice was, "Stop hanging around in loud Cleveland bars." But then he went on to say, "Let the mic do the work." This was the sentence I kept looking for in Arnoldo's article.

EQUIPMENT CHECK

Unless they're working in community theater or on a Broadway stage, mobile DJs don't always have to practice projection and diaphragmatic breathing. A better strategy is to take a tip from the radio jocks and use microphones with a nice, tight front end. Mobile DJs often overlook this aspect of the mic, focusing more on the new bandwidth considerations, effective range (for wireless mics) and price. Yet the pick-up pattern of the microphone will allow a DJ to use the amplification (gain) of his PA system to project his voice, rather than having to yell during an event. If the pattern is too "sloppy," the result will be feedback that even a feedback eliminator can't completely cure.

This strategy also allows DJs to use the full range of their vocal gifts! Properly amplified, you will regain all of the inflection you use during conversation—lost when yelling—and even a whisper will command attention even with the loudest, most rambunctious audiences.

ALL THE RIGHT STUFF

All the other tips Arnoldo shared were right on: Don't shout, warm up before an event and cool down with some vocal exercises afterward, drink plenty of water, use proper breathing techniques and so on. (I highly recommend re-reading the article!) I'll only add that, aside from the empty calories and sugar considerations, the admonition against soda (pop, for all you Midwestern readers) isn't entirely true. As correctly pointed out, overly clearing one's throat or coughing does put strain on vocal cords and the carbonation of soda can lessen the need. Warm drinks, such as green or liquorice tea, are also beneficial. Lastly, vocal cords need to remain moist to be flexible, so along with lots of water, some tricks used by professional singers and vocalists include keeping some slippery elm lozenges on hand and running a humidifier at night.

We spend a lot of time during our days on what we might call "maintenance:" shaving, brushing teeth, exercising and on and on. We'll spend buckets of money for exercise machines, vitamins, teeth whitener, you name it. For those of us who depend on our voices for a living, it's a must to devote just as much time, money and effort incorporating vocal care into our daily routines.

Until next time, safe spinnin'! **ME**

*Stu Chisholm, a mobile DJ in the Detroit area since 1979, has also been a nightclub DJ, done some radio, some commercial voice-over work and has even worked a roller skating rink! Stu attended the famous Specs Howard School of Broadcasting and has been a music collector since the age of seven. Stu's guide to the profession, **The Complete DJ**, is available from ProDJ Publishing.*



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Mike's writing certainly is sharp: He wields his pen as well as a swordsman or a machete-wielding explorer hacking his way through the jungle...It slices with clearly-spoken truth and wry wit that might sting some of the actors in this industry's theater of the absurd, but for the general reader, will make this trip through Mobile DJ history an enjoyable journey with an entertaining guide.

Dan Walsh, Mobile Beat Editor-in-Chief

A Different Spin

The Evolution and Revolution
of the Mobile DJ

Michael Buonaccorso

The "shock and awe" inside look
at the Mobile DJ industry... a
no-holds-barred history of the
strange development of a unique
entertainment phenomenon



Ratcheting Up the Revenue: An Event Snapshot

ON BEING A DJ-ORIENTED PRODUCTION COMPANY

BY JAKE FELDMAN •

In life, just as in business, there are clients and customers who you prefer working with, and some, not so much. Then, there are those who you absolutely love working with, and who actually consult you on decisions pertinent to your area of the production. This is a story of the latter.

Every year, we provide production services for Iowa DECA, which is a high school business and marketing group who's main objective is to ready students for college, the business world and beyond. This, combined with real world training makes DECA an outstanding organization and also means the students involved with it are very bright, very professional and pleasant to work with.

Normally, only sound and minimal lighting and video is required for their twice-yearly gatherings—meaning that depending on entertainment options for the 1.5 day mini-conference, their total tab is around \$2,000. This cost is discounted because of the days involved (non-peak dates and Sunday/Monday engagements) and the fact that this particular group has been an account of ours since 2005.

This year, however, DECA combined with the Iowa chapters of both BPA (Business Professionals of America) and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) to form the "United Student Organization Fall Conference," which enabled all three groups to get stellar production services, utilize the same entertainment, meeting spaces, and food at a great discount, and also network inter-organizationally to help their members become even more well-rounded.

PREPPING FOR A BIGGER EVENT

Different companies prep in different ways, with some estimating equipment needs

based on the schedule and (after meeting with the client) working up a proposal based on what they can provide with the gear they have. Others, like our company, start with a fresh "slate" and really judge what the needs of the client are, and (utilizing industry-standard equipment that will work for a variety of events) will even augment their equipment when necessary to produce an event that's top notch.

The two keys with any event as large as this, though, are 1.) Understanding the specific needs of your client to a "T" and, 2.) knowing when you can handle an event and when you should pass it off to more qualified individuals. If you simply are a DJ company who has a few powered speakers and believes a few DJ-style mixers and some basic wired mics will do, please do not attempt production events. Crossfaders are not found on live-sound mixers, and yes—there is a difference between mic and line impedance.

An important thing to remember is face-to-face meetings, and not just one. They allow yourself and your client to share diagrams, drawings, and schedules in real-time, and also to deal with any questions they might have in person. Email is great, however, when you're working with higher-maintenance clients it should be only one of many tools used to connect, not the only tool.

Equipment-wise, depending on your business plan, you won't want to purchase anything you can't use at least 10 times in the coming year as a special purchase just for this event. It is also important that you deliver on promises you have made, i.e. if you don't have the proper video equipment to make the show work, it will build more points to be honest than to fake it.

BOOKING THE BIG EVENT

Once you find out your client's needs, putting together a proposal that is fair to both your company and their budgetary needs is crucial.

Be very prepared to change the proposal and don't be offended if your company's former main draw (in our case, DJing Sunday night for the Dance) is passed over to someone cheaper for one portion of the event, as was the case with this show. The way I figure it, we're making way more money NOT having to worry about the stress of what song to play and making sure it's appropriate. If it bothers you that badly, offer to rent the DJ gear, because it will open their eyes to the fact that the rental of your high quality gear would cost them more than they are receiving for their performance.

With full disclosure in mind, we settled on \$4,400 for a two-day event (details are in a sidebar). This was a fair price on our end, because it maintained our pricing and rental philosophies (rental=10% of cost of item) along with being fair to the client, because it gave them piece of mind. The client also provided an on-site hotel room at the venue for my two crew members, so they could have a place to serve as "home-base" and take their breaks.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

A million different things can happen with a larger show, so you need an experienced crew and also a great attitude. I can guarantee you the hours will be long, but the money will be great—especially if the client is happy with your services and uses you for years to come.

The combined United Student Organization conference was broken into two events, one for secondary (high school groups) and the second for post-secondary (college students). The high school event (approx. 1,300 in attendance) began on Sunday at 2:30 PM and ended on Monday at 11:00 AM, where the college event (approx. 150 in attendance) started at 2:30 PM on Monday and ended at 10:00 AM on Tuesday. Technically speaking, the situ-



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ation called for one main seminar room (also used for dinner and nightly entertainment), and five breakout rooms. each with a projector/screen, one speaker "on a stick," and wireless lapel, handheld, and headset mics in each.

Each breakout room was used only for one hour on Sunday, and a combined total of three hours Monday—meaning that most of the festivities occurred in the main room, which was constantly re-configured seating-wise based on the type of event being held. The large room's video display also featured two 10-foot projection screens flanking the stage with two plasma screens on trussing, upstage left and right. Lighting was also an integral part of the show, with LED wash lighting providing the main stage light, and LED moving heads being utilized as spotlights (atop 10' truss pillars along the wall approx. 30' from stage right and stage left).

Audio design for the main room proved a bit tricky, based upon the room's layout with pillars and major blind spots. In situations like this, speaker placement is key, and auxiliary speakers serving those spots that aren't exactly ideal for guests

are mandatory. In this case, a major area of concern was directly behind the front-of-house sound mix platform (which also boasted a 4'x4' support pole behind it). However, with correct sound positioning, I was able to cover the entire area nicely (for presentations and slight background music) with three sets of QSC K-Series K12's, two K-Subs, and three stage monitors.

PERFORMING THE EVENT

The success of a big event always directly correlates to the preparation one puts into it. A site survey is a must, and even when that happens, you must still be prepared for anything to happen once you begin loading in. At this event, many factors came into play, with the primary problem being the popularity of booking this particular venue over this span of dates. Load in was rushed, but load out was even more rushed. To complicate matters even more, Tuesday's seminar was moved into a smaller room due to fewer attendees than expected, leaving our crew to tear out the large "main room" Monday evening while another production company simultaneously set up for Tuesday's event. Needless

Clear Definition of Self

Being known in an area by a very distinct title is always a good thing. It gives clarity to who you are as a company and also helps your customers know what they can expect. The specific company of that I helm, BC Productions, is known to our customers as Iowa's only "DJ-Oriented Production Company." Since re-branding ourselves with this moniker over two years ago, we have opened up our clients' minds for add-ons and extras, thus increasing our revenue for events already on the calendar.

An Event Success Timeline

10 Months out ▪ Informed of event, start to brainstorm ideas.

4 Months out ▪ Meet for first time to discuss specifics, send proposal for next-day delivery.

3 Months out ▪ Finalize proposal and send contract.

2 Months out ▪ Inventory equipment needed, order anything that's needed.

3 Weeks out ▪ Notify staffing of the event

1 Week out ▪ Contact hotel, check about load-in/other events in venue/things to be aware of/deadline for specific presenters' A/V requirements.

3 Days out ▪ Pack for event, with things needed first towards front/last towards rear, etc. Also remember that you may need to store extra cases, lids, etc. in truck during show. ▪ Final confirmation of details with client.

Day of Show ▪

- Walk through before loading in.
- Load in/set up, and clean up (remember dress code for event).
- Perform event. Maintain attitude.

After Event ▪ Strike/load-out as quickly as possible and be mindful of incoming productions.

to say, freight elevator and dock space were at a premium.

GETTING SOMETHING OUT OF IT

In a very Zen sort of way, it is what it is. Production events like these are much different than large DJ events, because in essence you are simply a technician and you and your crew are just there to set the gear up, tear the gear down, and make sure all runs smoothly. Events like these may seem like a lot of work, but I have to ask you: When was the last time you utilized your gear and your production experience on a random (non-peak) two-day time span to command what it would have taken you three-five weddings to earn?

Sure, it helps that I happen to dig these clients and the positive business values they instill into their student members. It also helps that the director is a wonderful woman who puts her heart and soul into her organization (all my favorite clients live and breath what they do). But, it is in essence the fact that I absolutely love to provide quality services for our clients and make their lives easier, their shows run better, and their conferences and events more successful because we were a part of it. **MB**

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Being Aware of Your Surroundings and Using Them to Your Benefit

BY ROB JOHNSON •

Some of my best events come as a result of unplanned stuff that is going on around me. I learned early in my career that adapting to your environment and the people at your shows make for a much better event.

People love to be part of the show. If you can figure out how to change on the fly and use your surroundings, you will have more success. Weddings are easy. Not always, but generally most of you have it down and probably do a great job at weddings. What about shows that are outside of your comfort zone? Do you do weekly shows at a bar, nursing home, church or other event? If you do, you know that you cannot come in with a "set" show and

you. At the recent Mobile Beat show I noticed publisher Ryan Burger's daughter was selling Girl Scout cookies. We had a wheel out front and were giving away prizes. I decided to put a box of girl scout cookies on the wheel. This accomplished a couple things. It made for some HAPPY DJs who won cookies...and it helped a young lady go to camp. Did it help DigiGames? That's debatable, but it definitely attracted attention. At the end of the show, with a captive audience at the final giveaway, I pulled her up on stage and DigiGames bought every box she had left and threw them into the crowd. Publicity stunt? Maybe. I didn't look at it that way at the time. I wanted to use my surroundings to have some fun. I don't think DigiGames made a sale for giving them away but I know we made a young lady happy and also about 35 people who caught free cookies.

If you can figure out how to change on the fly and use your surroundings, you will have more success.

follow a routine. It will get really old for the customers who see you week in and week out. You need to mix it up.

As a comedy stage hypnotist I have a very similar pattern for each show. Yet each show is completely different because the volunteers are all unique. One of my strengths is finding that gem in every crowd to help me make for a memorable show. In game shows it usually takes care of itself. The cream rises to the top, so to speak. Generally speaking, the most out-going participants will stand out.

So how do you use your surroundings? Keep your eyes open. I saw the new Trivia Towers from DigiGames for the first time at the Mobile Beat Vegas show. It is a cool new system that lights up when you ring in. For trivia it will be awesome. When I found out you can light them up and leave them on, or set them to different patterns, we immediately thought they would be cool accent lights or uplighting. You do the Trivia Event and then you move them to a different spot to make your DJ set up look awesome. They weren't designed that way but what a great use of your surroundings to improve your show.

Be aware of who and what is around

Sometimes you use the things around you as props to improve your performance. I do a lot of interactive events during the week. I find the more I can use the staff, residents, students or whoever I am performing for, the better the event will be. I am often using common items I see around a room as props or subjects for my games. Whatever it takes.

The more creative you are, the better your events can be. The better your events are, the more events you will book. The more you book, the more you should be able to make. It is all about increasing your bottom line, in my opinion. We are very fortunate to get to entertain people for a living. We have a fun outlet for making money. Many of you concentrate on weddings. If that works for you, great. If you want to try something a little different, go for it. Talk to another DJ who has expanded their bookings to include more Midweek Money. Do a little research. Call me at 701-710-1657 or better yet email me at rob@digigames.com. I don't just do DigiGames. There are lots of options out there. Have fun and keep making people smile. **ME**



Rob Johnson has hosted Trivia Parties and Game Shows for over 10 years. He is the current spokesperson for DigiGames and uses their equipment exclusively. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean. Rob is also the owner of The

Music Man, Inc. and performs comedy stage hypnosis shows as The Hypno Man. He has also presented his "Midweek Money" seminar at multiple conferences and conventions including Mobile Beat, WEDJ, Wedding MBA, WedPro2011, ArmDJs, and various ADJA events. If you would like Rob to speak at your local event or demonstrate DigiGames gear to your group, contact him at 701-710-1657 or rob@digigames.com.

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California (Gear) Love

ONCE AGAIN, NAMM DAZZLES WITH A SUNSHINE STATE OF EQUIPMENT BLISS

BY JAKE FELDMAN •

The truth is, NAMM is looked at every year as a chance by midwest music gear retailers, northern media nerds, and northeastern exhibitors alike as a chance to escape the frozen tundra in their hometowns and travel to a place less wintry. Sure, there's smog, heavy traffic and a unusual rodents, but SO-CAL is better than NO-CAL in January. Put together an escape from the cold with the siren call of new entertainment technology, and you have a winning combination for gearheads everywhere.

Once again the NAMM organization invited members and followers out to the Anaheim convention center to feast their eyes on the latest-and-greatest the music instrument retail sector has to offer, and also to catch glimpses of myriad of artists

that make those musical machines sing. We only have room for DJ-centric items here, but that will be enough to fill the allotted space nicely.

THE SKINNY

I actually began this year's floor tour with long-time Rane lead-man Mike May, who showed me the exciting things that the company has been working on this past year. For starters, the new series of the Sixty-One and the Sixty-Two are like the little brothers of the TT57. Both have exciting features. Especially interesting was the Sixty-Two's ability to facilitate the ease of use of two computers being switched seamlessly, making guest DJ spots at your events attainable with much less support hardware needed.

In the next hall over, American DJ had set up a very impressive set of booths for their family of companies, including ADJ Lighting, Elation Professional, and American Audio. On the lighting side of things, some very exciting new technologies were represented, including: the Funfactor LED, which has RGBW color mixing and an LED strobe;

the Jelly-Par and Mega-Par all-in-one 4-head par system, and the rebirth of rollers: the Double Phase LED and the InnoRoll LED (also available in scanner). I like big lights and am a fan of the phrase "There is no such thing as overkill," so the new moving head LED screens by American DJ's other lighting affiliate, Elation, were the absolute coolest video-centric product on the floor at NAMM 2012.

Similarly, American Audio had a few new players, mixers, and speakers as well. On the cabinet front, they just rolled out their Sen Series full line of speakers,

which boast German engineering and design. PA-wise, I was impressed by the new XLT line of amps, which put out impressive power and utilize new technology to weigh in the range of 16 to 25 pounds. The show saw the release of the VMS4 Traktor edition, which has been heavily anticipated as the highly-popular controller's marriage to the also well-liked software.

At SKB, the case manufacturer has some interesting things in the works for this next calendar year. Besides the super-sleek military grade offerings that are for the inner soldier in everybody, SKB also has a new "Gigrak" and an updated version of the classic slant-top rack, the R-102. Talking with the honchos of the (traditionally) hard molded case company, it seems that they're refocusing their strategies on how they can better serve the DJ Industry and mobile DJs specifically, which was a pleasant surprise for the MB contingent.

DJ-Tech was once again represented by a neat booth. On one side was DJ-Tech, the back-to-basics supplier of controllers and media players. A couple of products to watch for include the Dragon Two controller and the 4-Mix controller. The second side of their booth showcased their new "DEEJAY LED" brand that featured some slick new LED effects (such as the MyDerby) and wash lights (such as the LED PAR), all geared at very competitive price points for consumers doing "everyday" events.

One thing about NAMM is the presence of security and the number of times you must show your badge and ID to navigate the monstrous expo floor and move booth to booth. With that in mind, upstairs and through two sets of security barriers was Line-6 in their demo room. New for the first quarter of 2012 were their updated digital wireless mics, the XD75 and XV35, encompassing even more features than their older siblings. The most exciting new product from Line-6, however, was the announcement of a new line of powered speakers known as the StageSource



PSST--HERE'S A TIP ABOUT A COOL PRIZE... THE DJ QUICK TIP CONTEST



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The DJ Quick Tip Winner will be the special guest at the American DJ Customer Appreciation Party, which has featured performances by stars like Naughty By Nature, Cupid and DJ Kool.

IT'S EASY

Just go to the American DJ Facebook page (facebook.com/americandj), click on the contest tab, and enter your short (100 word) tip on how DJs can raise their game. This can be advice on avoiding on-stage fiascos, working a crowd, getting more bang for your lighting/audio buck – or any other bit of wisdom.

IT'S FUN

Your tip will be posted on the American DJ Facebook page, so the whole world will see how smart you are! Plus, you'll be able to see all the advice that other DJs are giving.

IT'S REWARDING

The winner gets an all-expense paid trip for two to Mobile Beat 2013 in Las Vegas courtesy of American DJ. This includes airfare and hotel and \$200. Plus, there will be nine runners up, who get their choice of any American DJ or American Audio product priced under \$100 retail.

IT'S GOT A DEADLINE

All entries must be received by 5pm Pacific Time, November 20, 2012. Only entries submitted through the ADJ Facebook page considered. Winners announced December 5, 2012.

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series. The Stagesource L3t is a tri-amped 1400-watt digitally referenceable speaker that's just about the "smartest" cabinet I have ever seen. It is also the first speaker I know of that is targeted at DJs that has a built-in digital gyroscope that senses when the speaker should be used as a main or a floor monitor. Also, the speaker has built-in crossover modes that lend itself to certain circumstances, such as the frequencies of live music, recorded music, keyboards or pianos, or guitars. If you're also into live sound, the company also introduced an extremely advanced 20 channel mixer known as the StageScape 20m that—when hooked up to the speakers—can change the dynamics of the crossover inside the speaker with a click of a button (or a finger poke on the touch screen of the 20M). Of course, this is all done through the wonders of Line-6's new "L6 Link" technology.

Back on the floor in the Chauvet Booth, the Miami-based lighting innovator was pumped to be releasing a broad range of products in the next 365 days. First and foremost, one was hard-pressed not to notice the impressive Nhimbus low-lying fog machine that was cranked up every hour upon the hour. The machine uses dry ice and is extremely mobile and relatively conservative in regards to the energy it uses to create the fog the machine was ably pump-

ing out. Indeed, rollers are back in a big way (this time with LED), and Chauvet was showcasing their versions, along with their "Freedom Wireless" series, which encompasses the FreedomPar and the FreedomStrip Mini. Both versions are, of course, wireless DMX equipped (remote controlled) and battery powered, hence the name "freedom"—freedom from cables. The new Intimidator Spot 250 and 350 also are worth a look at your local gear shop.

Pioneer DJ is always a highlight for me. This year the focus was on the absolutely "friggin'" awesome conversion of a few of their prime media players to a white limited-edition style. Their main new controller product that is targeted towards

mobile DJs is the Ergo Controller, which was graciously shown to me by DJJAY Brannon and by Pioneer Marketing whiz Ryan Barnes. The Ergo, or DDJ-ERGO-V as it's known on inventory sheets, is designed as a solution for the DJ who likes to hone his or her skills in small places. Complete with a laptop dock under the backside of the controller (allowing the user to still control and view the screen), the unit is also designed to give the user a touch of style, with LED inlays that compliment the DJ's natural environment.

Elsewhere on the main floor, Eternal Lighting showcased their new trussing and LED lighting effects. Their CUBE series, the ones all over Facebook, were a definite hit with end-user DJs who managed to score a pass to NAMM (not usually open to end-users) to talk with company reps.

Stanton also had a nice, relaxing room in which to view their new wares. In fact, they presented their new SCS 4DJ controller, along with the SCS-3 that has been recently upgraded to perform with Virtual DJ. The company seemingly is roaring forward into 2012 and was recently acquired by Gibson guitars, the Nashville-based Guitar giant who has single handedly headlocked the guitar market for the better part of a century. Mark my words, big things are

coming for Stanton DJ!

Electro-Voice always has a big presence at trade shows, and NAMM was no exception. They have re-launched their ZX and ZXa series of speakers and had a very neat demo of their previously-released Live-X series that showed off A-B comparisons of the cabinets.

Gemini was also present at this year's conference, showing off their new 2700 Media Player, which is touch screen-equipped and very (to use a new word) "Clutch." The top controller piece is a 2U unit that is complimented by a 1U-sized CD tray. Once more, the touch screen even presented audio waveforms (much like some expensive software) making beat-mixing easier for the visually-inclined crowd. The company was also showing off the CDMP-7000, which is a combination controller with CD player and mixer.

My last stop was over at the Yamaha complex to view their brand-new generation of powered speakers, the DXR Series. The plastic-molded series comes in two-way 8", 10", 12", and the mighty 15". The DXS Series also got 12" and 15" subwoofers to augment the low-end. These digital speakers were also represented by an enclosed sound-proof booth demo that highlighted the impressive sound output vs. physical blueprint of the series.

And there you have it; another year, another NAMM winter gear extravaganza. Thankfully, this year we got out before Saturday, because Saturday is the day in which anyone who knows anyone can score a pass to the expo floor. What does this mean? Every person who has ever picked up a guitar is in a booth pretending to be Eddie Van Halen, and every person who has ever picked up a drumstick is pretending to be Neal Peart (20-minute drum solo and all). With all the rock & roll fashion and musician uniqueness that is part of NAMM, the people watching is almost as fun as the new gear gawking.

I hope you've enjoyed my recount of the NAMM floor, and if there's anything you want to ask me about my yearly visits to NAMM, please email me at jfeldman@mobilebeat.com to fire your questions at me. Until next time, we'll see you on the road to MBLV! **MB**

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Headed for Disaster... But the Show Must Go On

BY GEOFF SHORT •

There may be nothing that attracts Murphy's Law better than live entertainment. That's part of the thrill of any live performance.

The audience knows that the performer could fall flat on their ass at any given time. This has actually happened to me. I was singing with my band when my foot got tangled in a cord and I literally fell on my ass right into one of the horn players' horns. Not only did I bend this poor guys mouth piece, but I almost ended up with a trumpet up my butt (which would have given new meaning to "tooting"!). But I digress.

From the performer's perspective we know that at any time the electricity could blow (which has also happened to me – of course) or a sandbag could fall on their head. It's navigating this sort of tight-wire dance between performer and audience and how we handle these potentially armageddonous (yes, I made that up) moments that really makes us entertainment professionals.

I'm not talking about back-up gear. That's easy. Any good, professional DJ already is prepared with back-up systems and gear and there are a multitude of online resources from experts with advice about back-up gear.

But what about performance skills in case of a gear melt down or event disasters, some of which may have nothing to do with your gear at all? Bad weather, delays from the wedding party, even fights can spell disasters in the hands of an unprepared artist. As a theatre veteran and life-long singer, I have seen firsthand some of the funniest and most unfortunate mishaps on stage that can happen to a performer. Missed entrances, forgotten lines, falling set pieces all are almost expected. I have also learned from the best performers over the years how to handle these crises. Here are a couple pieces of advice from someone who could fill a thousand blogs with embarrassing performance mishaps.

Create a team with the audience. Once you have created great rapport with the audience, they will be on your side—no matter what happens. The best way to do that is with honesty. I call this the Restaurant Rule. How often have you been at a restaurant that is having some sort of problem in the kitchen? If you've been left to sit there with no communication, waiting for a long time or worse, given some line of BS about the food coming out any second, you don't sympathize at all with the server. There's nothing they can do right after that. You most certainly won't leave a tip. But if the server communicates with you about the challenge, shows empathy and offers solutions like a free drink or appetizer and brings you frequent updates, you end up pulling for them. You are more likely to forgive the problem. Everybody makes mistakes, right? Do the same thing with your audience. Create a team with the audience and they will be on your side.

Improvise. If any group of entertainers are experts at improvising, it's DJs. I have seen countless brilliant solutions to challenges related to gear from our community. We invent ways to haul our gear, set-up our gear, even invent...gear. DJs are hustlers who know how to solve problems. But how fast do we think on our feet in performance? If we apply that same do-it-yourself ingenuity to our performance, big

problems can seem like little bumps in the road. This is also where a theatre class or improv workshop can help develop these skills and really come in handy.

Rehearse. Planning for the un-planned is the best tool for handling mishaps. Rather, controlling what can be controlled frees your mind and body to be able to improvise solutions when something goes wrong. The more you know and are familiar with your gear, the event, the venue, etc. the more prepared you will be to come up with spur of the moment solutions. Think about what you would say if the power went out or a fight broke out, and practice it. If your event timeline is completely organized, you're better prepared if it needs to change suddenly.

Know and LOVE the other vendors. Going back to the Restaurant Rule, there is perhaps no better friend in the world for a struggling restaurant server than the cook. They can choose to quickly change an entree helping the server solve a problem as fast as possible. But only if treated with respect, given information, made part of the team and even maybe given a piece of the tip they helped save. The same is true for other vendors at a special event. Creating an onsite team not only helps the event run smoothly, but can also be a great help in improvising solutions in an emergency. If the power blows, can the photographer improvise some quick and fun group shots? Can the bar deliver everyone a drink? By the way, industry networking events are great ways to create relationships with other vendors.

Embrace Mistakes. There's a saying that goes, "Mistakes are the beginning of discovery." Everything is a learning experience if you treat it that way. Mistakes can help prepare you for future mishaps and even help you develop new tools.

Don't panic. Above all else, keep cool. You're a DJ. You know how to be cool. You can't do anything if you're a panicked, unorganized mess.

Finally, I think the most important element in keeping things in your favor in emergencies is experience. Over the years, I have developed an almost innate sense of what to do, or, more accurately, how to act when things don't go as planned on a gig. There's not a gig that goes by with my band that I don't forget some lyrics. Dozens of songs, thousands of lyrics all while juggling all the other aspects of being the MC and band leader and dropping some lyrics is inevitable. But the audience never knows. Keeping the show moving, being inconspicuous about mistakes and coming up with entertaining ways to cover them have become life-long habits.

Stuff happens. Especially in show business. And above all else, the show must go on. But thinking about some of these things may just help you prevent ending up with a trumpet up your butt. **ME**

Geoff is a DJ, band leader and the Sales and Promotions Manager for Jerry Bruno Productions in Cleveland, Northeast Ohio's largest live music entertainment company (www.jerrybruno.com). Geoff is also a singer, actor and director who has performed in musical theatre, pop groups and other performing groups since he was 10 years old. He has performed alongside legendary musical acts like Isaac Hayes, Martha Reeves and Leslie Gore. Check out www.geoffreyshort.com for more info.

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Sub Commander

SUBCONTRACTING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A NIGHTMARE: 5 STEPS TO MAKE IT WORK

BY RIC HANSEN •

Call me crazy, but I cannot figure out why anyone would want to be a multi-op DJ company. Oh, I understand the need to grow beyond a one-system, one-show-per-night company. It's a natural desire to want to grow beyond yourself. What I don't understand is how buying more equipment and hiring employees makes any sense.

cent wage, plus cover their unemployment insurance and L&I and other related taxes. Then of course you have to hire, and train them, take chances with your clients as they learn and make their rookie mistakes. Then, ultimately, they become great performers and decide to buy some gear and go on their own, only to leave you to start all over again.

The answer seems so simple to me: Find already existing great talent, with great equipment and a good work ethic and pay them to do what they have proven to do so well. Entertain. Yes, I am talking

where the problem lies.

My company, Radio Parties, has done literally thousands of DJ entertainment events since 1992 when I started it. I was not a mobile DJ, had no equipment and no DJ employees. Now, almost 20 years later, Radio Parties operates in 19 states working with 23 very picky radio station clients doing hundreds of events each year. I still am not a mobile DJ, own no equipment and have no DJ employees.

I do, however, have an absolutely stellar network of subcontracted DJ talent that represents us. I can't tell you how proud I am of this group of guys and gals. Week after week we get great reviews and a minimal number of problems along the way. But this great track record is no accident.

FIVE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SUBCONTRACTING

Here are the magical five ingredients to finding and working with sub-contracted mobile DJs...

1. Spend time and effort in recruiting. The vetting process is critical. We have developed a five-step process to finding the right people:

(a.) Specifically identify what kind of DJ you are looking for and publicize it wherever you can. Craig's List, or sending out emails to DJs listed in DJ directories, is usually where we start.

(b.) Have inquiring DJs fill out a profile that includes all the things you want to know about them in capsule form, and make sure to get a picture.

(c.) If you are interested based on the profile, call and spend some time talking on the phone to get to know them and their personalities and what makes them tick.

(d.) If all goes well on the phone, meet in person to discuss in detail what your company is all about, and what you are looking for, and more importantly, who they are and what they are looking for. Nothing beats a face to face.

(e.) Finally, simply send them on their first event, trusting you have screened properly and minimized our



The cost of equipment is huge. First you have to invest in the sound and lights (which depreciates the minute you buy it), then maintain the equipment, store the equipment, transport the equipment, insure the equipment, and ultimately replace the equipment with the latest gear. Add to that the cost of buying and licensing music for each system. Crazy.

How about the cost of "employees." To get good talent you have to pay a de-

about the "S" word: subcontracting.

Shudder at the thought. We've all heard the horror stories or have experienced them ourselves. Subs are un-reliable, uncontrollable, un-trustworthy. They are not loyal to your company and will steal clients if they can. They are difficult to direct and don't adequately represent your "brand." Well, I submit that the subs are not the issue—screening and managing them is

risk. At this point, we monitor very closely how they follow our guidelines. We do instant follow-up with the client to make sure all was good. If they pass the performance test we continue our relationship.

2. Treat your subs with respect. If you respect them, they will respect you. Always be up front, and honest. When offering them a job, be clear in writing the terms of the agreement. Exact times, place and pay. Leave no gray area or loose ends. Surprises breed mistrust.

3. Pay on time, every time. Subs have likely been burned in the past. It is absolutely critical that if you say they will be paid at a certain time, the agreed amount, that that happens without fail. If you are operating on thin cash flow and are strapped for cash, sub-contracting will not work for you. You will need to pay, whether or not you have been paid by the client. Period.

4. Give clear (written) direction and expectations. Most subcontractor relationships fail because there were too many gray areas. Make it black and white. Clear and consistent.

5. Make it known up front that the DJs who perform well and get great reviews, who follow your systems and are easy to work with, will always get the first call for upcoming opportunities. There's no hiring or firing, because there are no employees; it's the free market system at its best. Simply, the best DJs rise to the top and get the best and most job offers. Lack of performance, stealing customers or sloppy follow through will result in NO calls.

It is absolutely critical that you know and understand the legal guidelines for sub-contracting. The government is very clear about what it takes to qualify as a subcontractor relationship. You need to make sure you get a copy of those guidelines and follow them. Among other things, your subcontractor must use his or her own

gear, work other events independent of your company, be able to accept or reject any job offer you present, and work without hands-on control. It is preferred that your sub has their own business license as well.

Creating a company built on subcontracting is very different than simply calling a buddy to see if he can cover a show for you when you are busy. If you approach it with a clear business model, understand its advantages and potential failings, it can be both rewarding and lucrative. **MB**

I do some limited career coaching for serious DJs interested in this model. I charge an hourly fee to help guys set up and grow their business using sub-contractors. I can assist in building the systems that allow you to find and manage your DJ (sub) team. Over the 20 years of doing this, I have learned a lot through trial and error and am willing to help others avoid the pitfalls along the way. Call me at 800 954 3535 or email me at ric@radioparties.com if you think I could help grow your company.

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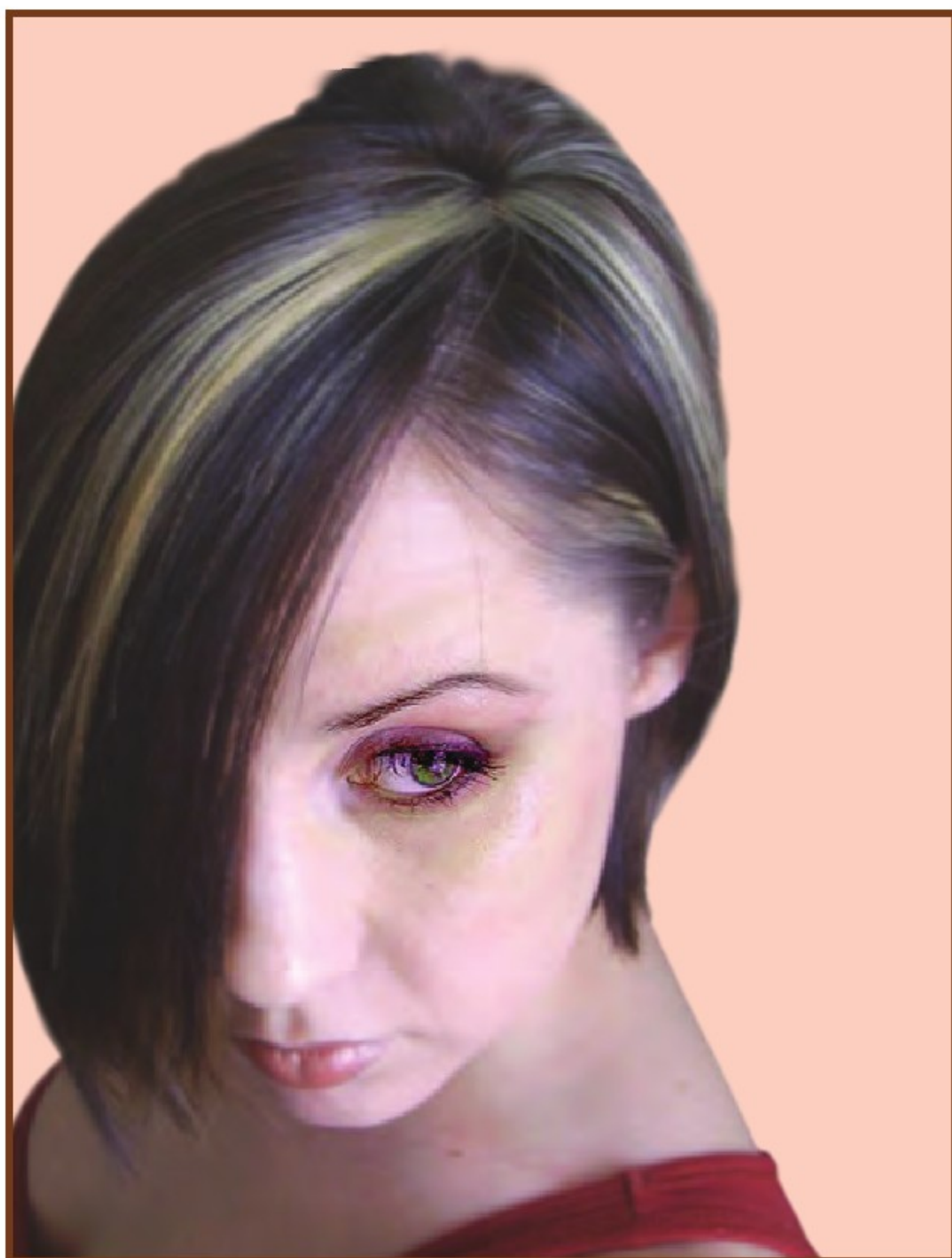
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How Do They Really See Us?

EYE-OPENING REVELATIONS FROM FELLOW EVENT PROS

BY PAUL KIDA, THE DJ COACH •

As part of the wedding industry, or as entertainment at other events, we work with a variety of other vendors. Wedding consultants, venue managers, caterers, photographers, and videographers are all part of the group of people we work with each week to make an event successful. At times, we look at these various people and pass judgment on them in one way or another. Although the majority of these fellow vendors are quite capable and easy to work with, we have all seen the pushy venue managers, the caterers who think they know best how to run a wedding reception, or the uncaring photographer who removes the bride, groom, and other guests and family off of the dance floor so that they can create some “artistic moment” with little regard for the flow of the event. That being said, the question is, “Have you ever wondered what these vendors that we work with view our DJ industry as a whole? Do we present a positive, mediocre or even a poor image to those we work with?”



PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS

In preparing this article, I decided to make a few phone calls to some of the exceptional venues, consultants, photographers, etc. in the Denver-Boulder, Colorado area. I’m not naming names, but I was amazed at some of the stories I heard, and I was shocked to find out that their overall view of disc jockeys is one of mediocrity. In general, the feeling is that most DJs show up, make a few announcements (if any!) and just play music for dancing. They said that they seem to do their job in an average way, without really taking the lead, or doing anything exceptional to make the event memorable.

Even worse, I was informed about one disc jockey who showed up to an event drunk and had to be removed from the venue site! Now this was a one-time occurrence, but it is enough to put a black eye on our industry and how we are viewed by others.

DON’T PLAN...PLAN TO FAIL

One major complaint that I heard over and over was that, in their opinion, a large majority of disc jockeys do not do enough planning with their clients ahead of time. They said that it seems to them that, at times, things are done that the bride and groom did not want and/or had no idea what was going on. Following close to a lack of planning was the complaint that many disc jockeys displayed lack of direction and control of the event as a whole.

Most of the banquet managers and venue coordinators that I spoke to realized that one of the primary responsibilities of a DJ is to take control of and direct the evening so that everything runs smoothly for the clients. It seems like a lot of DJs do not take the time to contact the other vendors that they will be working with to provide them with a written timeline that has been approved by the client so that everyone is on the same page the night of the event. Planning the flow of events with our clients, then communicating with all of the other vendors that we will be working with should be a part of each and every event that we do. I found that many of our fellow vendors really do expect this to be done by disc jockeys, and they feel disappointed when we do not fulfill this obligation.

PLEASE...THANK YOU

How are we at common courtesy? Things as simple as a courteous greeting with a smile on our face can mean a lot to the other vendors as we arrive and begin to set up. Do you like working with an unfriendly or even a rude or obnoxious person? Neither do those that are working with us. A pleasant attitude and a warm smile do a lot to create a great first impression. This should extend throughout the event so that we can build a positive rapport with our fellow professionals. It makes for a much more relaxing atmosphere for the clients and all concerned.

IS THERE AN MC IN THE HOUSE?

Are you a skilled Master of Ceremonies? Another big complaint I heard was that many of us are simply not skilled at this. As mentioned above,



quite a few of us just make announcements, as opposed to being a true Master of Ceremonies who directs, informs and guides the audience through the entire event. I was informed by one wedding consultant that she worked with more than one DJ who just refused to make any announcements at all during the evening. In fact, she had to make all announcements herself!

GEARING UP

Even if you are a great Master of Ceremonies, it won't make any difference at all if no one can hear you. Is your equipment up to par? Another vendor told me that some DJs use sub-standard equipment that just does not work well. Microphones that hum, buzz or fail completely, speakers that sound more like a grinding machine and setups that are totally unattractive or inappropriate were some of the other complaints I heard. We should check our equipment before each event, and then take any necessary steps to correct any problems.

THE CREAM RISES TO THE TOP

Now, I would never end this article without telling you about the positive side of things that I heard! The majority of vendors I spoke to said that there are also those of us that are the exact opposite of




Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment (www.jammcatsdj.com), and is a regular speaker at Mobile Beat DJ Shows.

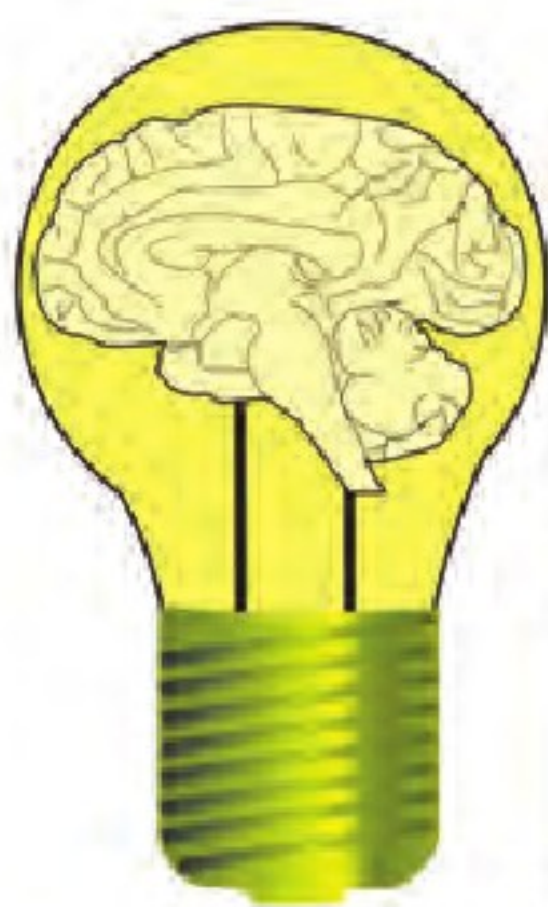
what I have previously described. There are those who stand out as exceptional, outstanding and easy for them to work with. They are considered the "cream of the crop" and recognized as special. More than one wedding vendor I spoke with said that they thought that being a wedding disc jockey is an extraordinary talent, and that they real-

ize the hard work and preparation that it takes for each and every event when a DJ is a true professional. They understand that it takes a unique flair to perform, engaging and directing the crowd to create a fun and unforgettable atmosphere for all attending.

Where do you fall in this range as a Disc Jockey/Master of Ceremonies? Are you mediocre or just average? Do you love your career choice—and does it show? Are you truly excellent? How do you think the vendors you work with would describe you? Most likely, those who blatantly display the negative aspects described here aren't even reading this because they just don't care how others view them. However, I know that the majority of you are working very hard to be the very best that you can be. There may be a few traits that we each need to work on to improve our talents, so in our next article, we will take a look at how we can make a few positive changes so that others will know that we are truly exceptional at what we do!

Please send any comments on this article or suggestions for future articles or questions to djcoach@mobilebeat.com. 

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Just the Right Spice

LIKE A MUSICAL CHEF, YOU CAN CREATE A TASTY PARTY MIX WITH THE APPROPRIATE “SEASONING” SONGS

BY JAY MAXWELL •



The greatest joys in life are often from enjoying the simple things. For me, one such delight is sitting down in the evening to enjoy my wife’s home-cooked meals. Just the other night we had rotisserie chicken, fried squash, and everyone’s favorite, mashed potatoes. The smell alone was exhilarating and it was tempting to not wait until the blessing was over to bring the first forkful to my mouth so my taste buds could connect with the delicious food. It was also the first opportunity my wife had to use her new gravy boat, something that she had wanted for quite some time. Everyone, with the exception of our son Robert, took an ample portion of the brown gravy from the new decorative container to enjoy a tasty topping for the mashed potatoes. Robert, still a picky eater at age eleven, preferred to use ketchup for his tater covering. The conversation that ensued for the next ten minutes included the different

options for enhancing an already marvelous dish like mashed potatoes, including how much salt to add or the oft-forgotten dash of black pepper.

Thankfully, no meal ever consists of only gravy, salt or ketchup. Those would not be very satisfying served alone, but as duly noted above, they can certainly add flavor to what is actually being served as the main course when added in the right proportions. Too much salt can ruin the vegetable and not enough spice leaves one wanting for a bit more. The same is true for many of the songs on this issue’s list. Playing only these songs at a party would be like serving ketchup, claiming that it is a vegetable. But mixing these songs in just the right amount can add flavor to the evening’s main entrée of dance music. A great DJ, like a veteran chef, knows how to pull the perfect spice from the shelf, add it at just the right time, and turn an ordinary event into an unprecedented experience.

Take, for example, some of the most requested songs from the list, “The Chicken Dance,” “Rocky Top,” or “The Hokey Pokey.” These songs are not your typical dance songs, but are at times just the necessary ingredient needed to add a little fun to the event. Although many a bride has given explicit instructions to us that those three songs (and others on this list) are NOT to be played at her wedding reception, some clients, including some brides, have

THE DJ’S PARTY SPICE RACK

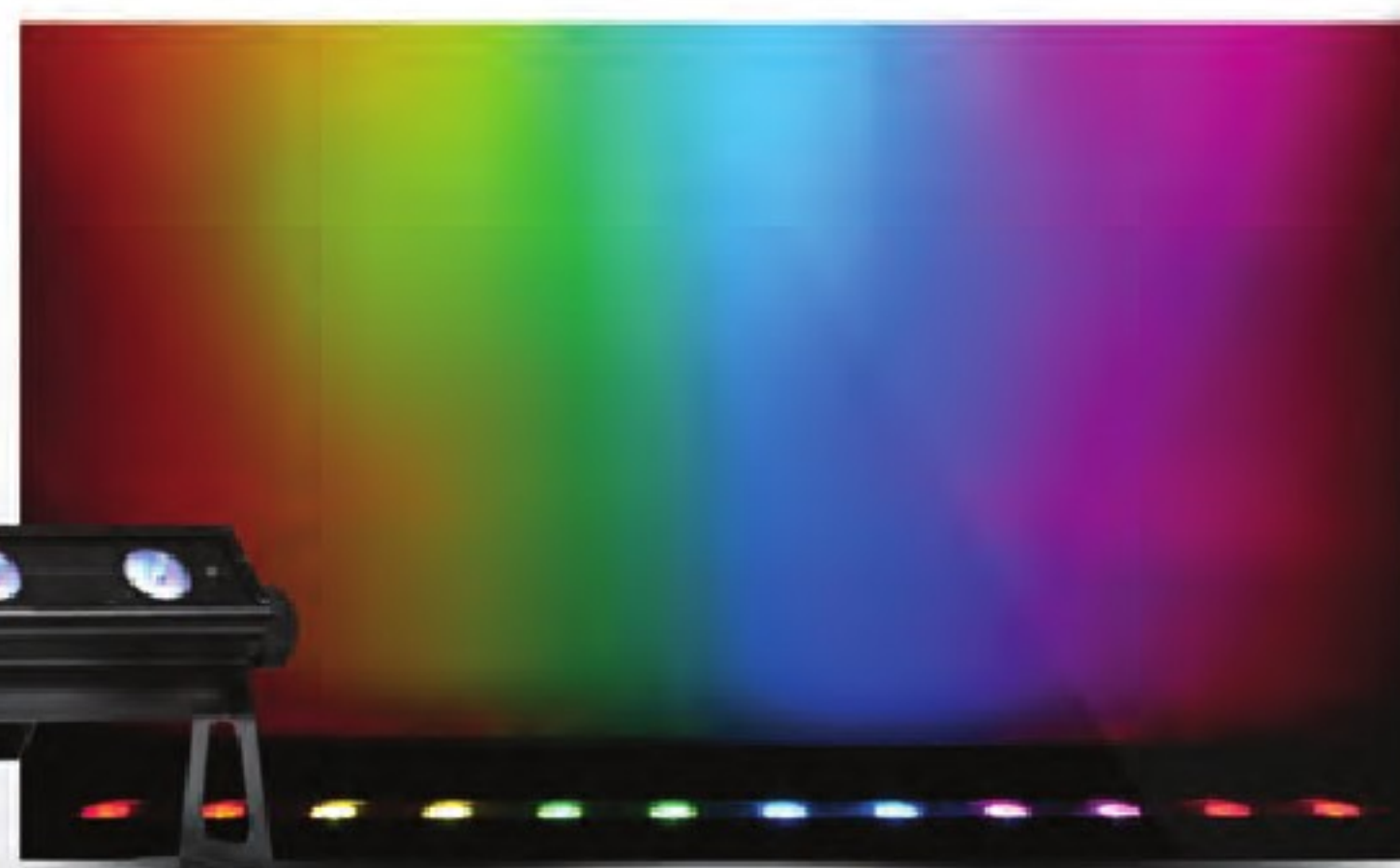
	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	YEAR
1	CHICKEN DANCE	EMERALDS	81
2	JUMP ON IT (Apache)	SUGARHILL GANG	82
3	ROCKY TOP	OSBORNE BROTHERS	80
4	HOKEY POKEY	RAY ANTHONY	53
5	WHO LET THE DOGS OUT	BAHA MEN	00
6	CONGA	GLORIA ESTEFAN	86
7	JUMP JIVE AN’ WAIL	BRIAN SETZER	98
8	IT’S RAINING MEN	WEATHER GIRLS	83
9	GREASE MEGAMIX	OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN	96
10	RED SOLO CUP	TOBY KEITH	11
11	COPPERHEAD ROAD	STEVE EARLE	88
12	LIFE IS A HIGHWAY	RASCAL FLATTS	06
13	LOCO-MOTION	KYLIE MINOGUE	88
14	WAGON WHEEL	OLD CROW MEDICINE	09
15	ZOOT SUIT RIOT	CHERRY POPPIN’ DADDIES	98

	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	YEAR
16	MARGARITAVILLE	JIMMY BUFFETT	77
17	COUNTRY ROADS (TAKE ME HOME)	JOHN DENVER	71
18	YOU NEVER EVEN CALLED ME	DAVID ALLAN COE	75
19	COPACABANA	BARRY MANILOW	78
20	TIME WARP	ROCK HORROR (SNDTRK)	77
21	KOKOMO	BEACH BOYS	88
22	DEVIL WENT DOWN TO GEORGIA	CHARLIE DANIELS	79
23	AMERICAN PIE	DON McLEAN	71
24	FIVE O’CLOCK SOMEWHERE	A JACKSON / J BUFFETT	03
25	EYE OF THE TIGER	SURVIVOR	82
26	CECILIA	SIMON & GARFUNKEL	70
27	HOT HOT HOT	BUSTER POINDEXTER	87
28	SWING THE MOOD	JIVE BUNNY	89
29	LIMBO ROCK	CHUBBY CHECKER	62
30	I WALK THE LINE	JOHNNY CASH	56

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	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	YEAR
31	ISN'T SHE LOVELY	STEVIE WONDER	76
32	HANG ON SLOOPY	McCOYS	65
33	YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT	OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN	78
34	SUGAR, SUGAR	ARCHIES	69
35	IN THE NAVY	VILLAGE PEOPLE	79
36	I GOT YOU BABE	SONNY & CHER	65
37	CHAPEL OF LOVE	DIXIE CUPS	64
38	CHEESEBURGER IN PARADISE	JIMMY BUFFETT	78
39	RING OF FIRE	JOHNNY CASH	63
40	SON OF A PREACHER MAN	DUSTY SPRINGFIELD	68
41	YOU CAN CALL ME AL	PAUL SIMON	87
42	PARADISE BY DASHBOARD LIGHT	MEATLOAF	78
43	HOEDOWN THROWDOWN	MILEY CYRUS	09
44	SATURDAY NIGHT	BAY CITY ROLLERS	76
45	GONNA BE 500 MILES	PROCLAIMERS	93
46	WIPEOUT	SURFARIS	63
47	ROCK LOBSTER	B-52's	80
48	SHAKE A TAIL FEATHER	JAMES & BOBBY PURIFY	67
49	JOCK JAMS	MEGA MIX	97
50	WILLIE AND THE HAND JIVE	JOHNNY OTIS	58
51	BUNNY HOP	RAY ANTHONY	53
52	CHANGES IN LATITUDE, ATTITUDE	JIMMY BUFFETT	77
53	HAPPY TOGETHER	TURTLES	67
54	SUMMER NIGHTS	J TRAVOLTA / O NEWTON-JOHN	78
55	IT'S NOT UNUSUAL	TOM JONES	65
56	RAPPER'S DELIGHT	SUGARHILL GANG	79
57	I'M TOO SEXY	RIGHT SAID FRED	92
58	THANK GOD I'M A COUNTRY BOY	JOHN DENVER	75
59	FINS	JIMMY BUFFETT	79
60	KUNG FU FIGHTING	CARL DOUGLAS	74
61	TEQUILA	CHAMPS	58
62	JOY TO THE WORLD	THREE DOG NIGHT	71
63	ESCAPE (Pina Colada Song)	RUPERT HOLMES	79
64	BANANA BOAT (DAY-O)	HARRY BELAFONTE	57
65	BARBIE GIRL	AQUA	97
66	LION SLEEPS TONIGHT	TOKENS	61
67	WEREWOLVES OF LONDON	WARREN ZEVON	78
68	WILD THING	TROGGS	66
69	ISLANDS IN THE STREAM	K ROGERS / D PARTON	83
70	ELVIRA	OAK RIDGE BOYS	81
71	SPLISH SPLASH	BOBBY DARIN	58
72	YAKETY YAK	COASTERS	58
73	YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR HAT ON	TOM JONES	86
74	MRS. ROBINSON	SIMON & GARFUNKEL	68
75	IN THE SUMMERTIME	MUNGO JERRY	70

specifically stated that these songs **MUST** be given a spin sometime during the party, on top of the regular dance songs. Just like some people don't like gravy on their potatoes and others want to pour it right into the middle of the white mound because they have different tastes in food, people also have different tastes in music.

We give our clients a list of almost 2,000 songs to begin their song selection for an event. Of course, we don't limit them to just these choices, but we try to get an idea of their taste in music based on their initial requests. Though many of the songs on this issue's list could also find a home on a different list like country ("I Walk the Line," "Elvira," and "Five O'Clock Somewhere") or a sock hop/oldies format, like James and Bobby Purify singing "Shake a Tail Feather" or "Yakety Yak" by the Coasters, we group them on a page called Just4Fun.

Some tunes have a dance unique to the song. When a DJ plays Sugarhill Gang's "Jump On It," those that know the song will mimic the dance moves made famous in the television show Fresh Prince

Thankfully, no meal ever consists of only gravy, salt or ketchup.

of Bel Air when Will and Carlton entered a dance contest. Perhaps it is only at a youth event that a DJ would want to bring out the limbo pole, but when he does employ the stick, "Limbo Rock" will be expected to shoot from the speakers. Australian singer Kylie Minogue 1988's "Loco-Motion," or the original version by Little Eva, can't be played without a train forming on the dance floor and chug-chugging around the entire perimeter of the room. When a few folks want to kick up their heels and swing, "Jump, Jive, and Wail" or "Zoot Suit Riot" will wear them out and woo onlookers to the dance floor.

At times during a party, people will request a song, not to dance to, but to sing along to and perhaps raise their glass up high in celebration. "Red Solo Cup" by Toby Keith is one of the newest additions to this category of songs. We've all had a red Solo® brand cup filled with our favorite beverage at a party before, and now every DJ is getting a request for this new impromptu sing-along that symbolizes the good times associated with the humble plastic container. Only time will tell if this new tune will remain more requested than other time-tested "let's get in a large group on the dance floor and sing as loudly and as badly as we can" standards like "You Never Even Called Me by My Name" and "Life Is a Highway."

Being a mobile disc jockey is a lot like owning an all-you-can-eat buffet. We realize that everyone's tastes are different. While kids like the little wieners in a blanket or chicken nuggets, adults will choose pork chops or a baked chicken breast when they fill up their plate. Some diners will take a heaping portion of mashed potatoes, others will go back for seconds on whole-kernel corn, and a few will wonder who in their right mind likes beets. But regardless of the variety of "meat and potato" offerings available, both the chef and DJ must know what else to offer to spice up the basic servings. Just like the cook in the kitchen must know what type of gravy to have available and what spices to use in cooking up some mouth-watering delights, the mobile DJ must also know what tunes to add "just for fun" when someone orders up a serving of "play something we can dance to!" **ME**

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Value Added Reseller vs. Doing It Yourself

BY MARK JOHNSON •

In the wholesale, commercial world, there is an entity called a Value Added Reseller, otherwise known as a VAR. A VAR has access to standard products but adds value (duh) to them to create larger, more valuable products. One of the more significant uses of the VAR concept is computer resellers. They purchase computers (perceived of as a commodity) and bundle them with the necessary network, communication and application software to create a finished business system.

Sure, any regular company could purchase a server from a system supplier, the network and communication software from another supplier and the application software from a third supplier. Then, acting as his own "GC" or "General Contractor," he could oversee the assembly of these components and hope that the time spent in this effort would not exceed the cost savings by doing it himself.

One of the values of a VAR is that they have put together many systems of a similar configuration and know all of the possible problems and how to fix them. Thus, they deliver a cohesive, single product to their customer, adding value along the way. Sure, their cost is greater than the sum of the components. But the end result is the correct system, operating in the proper manner. Plus, the customer can always call the VAR to handle future problems instead of 3-4 separate suppliers, who will no doubt deflect responsibility.

Similarly, Mobile DJs are concerned about the general population (our prospective clients) being able to "do it yourself" regarding providing music for their upcoming event.

Sure, the client could play "GC" and take their collection of MP3s, rent a decent sound system, perhaps rent some lighting, transport it to their event, set it up, make sure it all works together properly and end up with virtually the same effect as if they hired a DJ.

But they often overlook the need for someone to run the system during their

event. Unless they have a rigid pre-made playlist, or can settle for shuffle mode, someone will have to properly sequence the songs to match the unpredictable mood of their event.

Plus, they also overlook the need for a microphone and someone who can use it properly. Finally, they have to take down the system and return it to the rental company they got it from.

Would they have saved some money? Sure. Would they be burning the candle from both ends, having to be the host AND the DJ at the same time? You bet. What's it worth to the client to leave all of this to a single, cohesive professional instead of trying to patch the individual components together?

Our advantage is that we specialize in

Would the DIYer have saved some money? Sure. Would they be burning the candle from both ends, having to be the host AND the DJ at the same time? You bet.

combining all of these elements into a cohesive "product" instead of "winging it." We've done hundreds of parties before and can usually cover all the bases.

Part of the challenge is identifying the comfort or participation level of the customer and seeing how much of our service spectrum we can provide. In today's world, it boils down to the music that often convinces the client that that's all it is.

I play racquetball with someone who is becoming a Certified Financial Planner. As we were talking about what a CFP does, I can see some overlap between the professional services that he offers and those same services that individual investors can do for themselves.

As he was extolling the virtues of a CFP, he immediately drew a comparison to a smart person not doing his own heart surgery or his own dentistry. While true, it is an overly simple analogy to the value of his professional services to those that obviously one cannot do for oneself.

Oddly enough, his profession is in more jeopardy than ours. Granted, his stakes are higher, but in today's world, many elements that make up a profession can individually be automated or made common.

For this CFP, it boils down to three elements: Knowing what and when to buy or sell, being able to actually make the trade and to have an overall knowledge of the marketplace.

With all of the on-line trading websites, any regular person can sign up and pay a small fee to execute their own trades. Mechanically, you don't need a traditional stock broker anymore. Recall Gomez Addams commanding his broker to buy or sell. That broker never appeared to offer any stock information or guidance. He was merely an executor of the physical trade that the regular person could not perform.

But Mr. Addams had done his homework to know which stocks to buy or sell and when to execute that trade. Thus, Mr. Addams did what he could do, leaving what he couldn't do to a "professional."

Today, a regular person reviewing stock trades can both do his homework AND execute the trade. A CFP, as indicated earlier, can offer professional oversight on the entire spectrum of stock choices as well as understand the client's needs and goals.

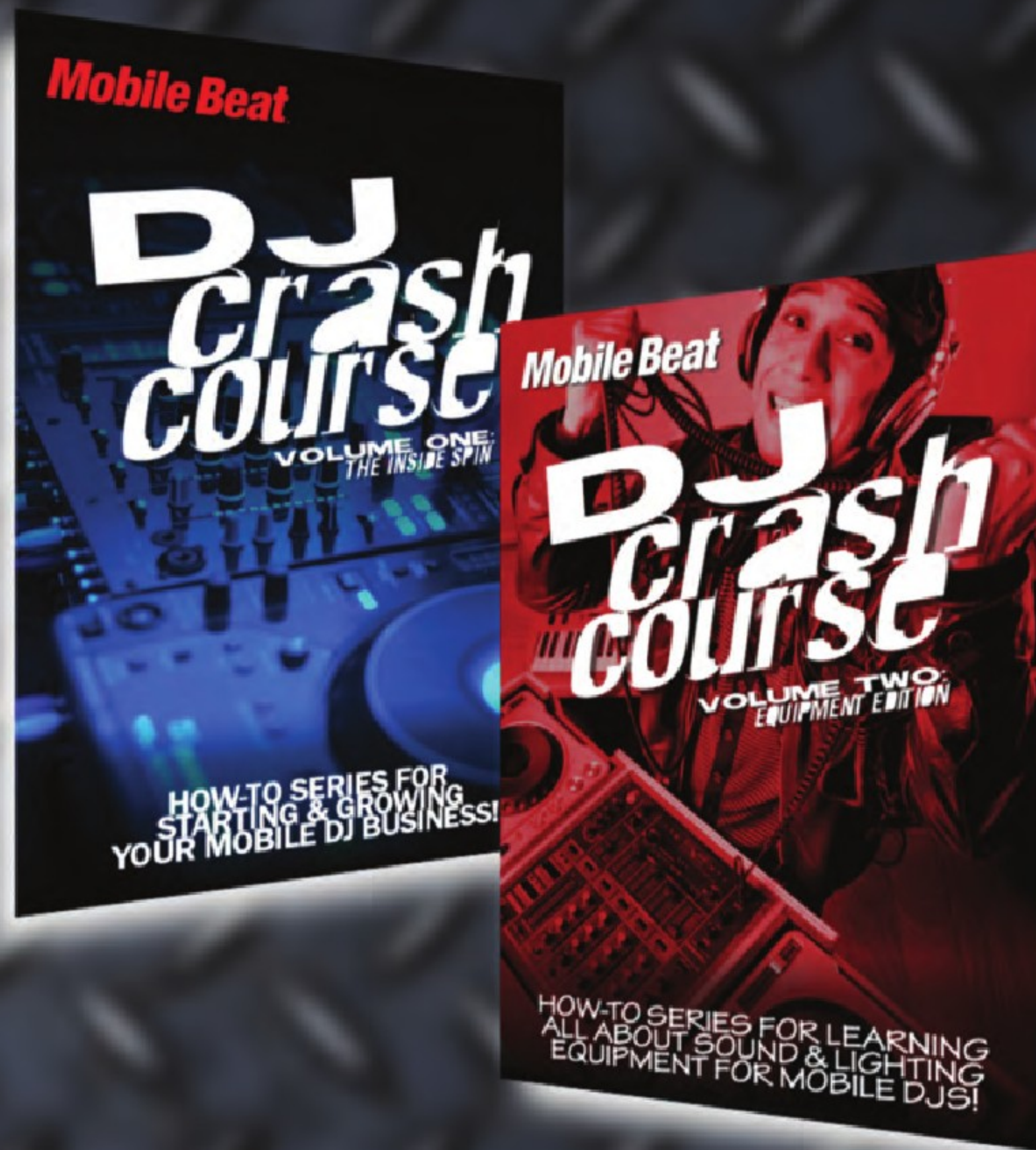
How does this relate to a Mobile DJ? Let's review all the services that we provide and draw a line between those that we can do and what the customers can do for themselves. Like the CFP there are things a mobile DJ can do that regular people cannot.

So Mr Addams would thrive in today's marketplace, not having to pay the commission to this middleman. There's the key word, "middleman." Get rid of the middleman and you get rid of a layer of commission that you don't need to pay (or cover).

Like someone doing his or her own stock trading, a regular person attempting to perform his own DJ services would have to temporarily acquire specialized knowledge to get the job done. Owning the music is just the beginning. **ME**

For over a decade, Mark Johnson has offered his insightful and often incisive perspective on issues of importance to mobile DJs here in Reality Check. His articles grow out of his own experience and observations of other DJs. Always providing an alternative view, his views are informed by a wide knowledge of the entertainment technology field and the professionals who work in it.

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Photo Magic

HOW TO MAKE THE PHOTOGRAPHER SMILE

BY ARNOLDO OFFERMAN •

Whether vendors want to admit it or not, DJs have the biggest impact over the course of an entire event. Depending on our preparation, skill level, and willingness to work with others, we can make the jobs that the other professionals do a lot easier—or a lot harder.

You already know this, so I'm really not going to set forth any further examples. However, if you have NO idea what I am talking about, then I suggest you read as many books, watch as many DVDs, and learn as much as you can about our profession.



A VIEW FROM INSIDE

My biggest hobby is photography. What started out as a simple DSLR and two basic lenses to get promotional photos, has developed into a full-blown kit with a myriad of primes, zooms, and specialty glass.

I've even gotten the chance to shadow a professional photographer and shoot a wedding.

This has allowed me to change my MC routines, lighting design, and overall show, to make things a lot easier for the photographers I work with. In turn, I get a lot more referrals, the satisfaction that my clients will get the best photos possible, and the photog-

raphers don't even care that I have a pro-level rig to shoot photos for myself.

That's right; and many have gone as far as to offer tips, exchange ideas, even lend me a lens or two for some specialty shots. One even offered a transmitter so I could use his off-cam flashes. For safety reasons, I deny these gracious offers, but the fact remains: I love photographers and they love me.

In turn, I would like to offer some ideas to help YOUR fellow photographers. This is based on shooting a wedding or two myself and thorough discussion with other photographers.

TIPS FROM THE TRENCHES

As you set up, try to find a nice spot for the photographer to stage their equipment. This also keeps them from plopping equipment down near your clean set up.

Contact the photog ahead of time, introduce yourself and give them a copy of the timeline and notes about the reception. Discuss any special activities, or any warnings on low-light situations or special lighting effects you'll be using.

Avoid direct LED lights. If possible, try bouncing floods off ceilings. The reason is that many photographers like shooting wide and with no flash. This yields to fantastic low-light shots, but if there's a direct flood, you will get a hot spot that ruins the moment. Bouncing lights also give a better presence of colors throughout the room.

Specialty lighting, such as laser dots, LED dots, etc should be OFF during important dances. This is especially true for laser dot effects, as a flash can't override these effects. The only thing that combats lasers is a high shutter speed. With flash, this is only as fast as 1/200, which doesn't help too much. The only special effects lights I recommend that can be ON during special dances would be moving heads, disco ball effects, and barrel lights such as a slow-moving Martin EFX600. However, leave those lights off for at least a minute during the song (you can leave the floods on). This allows the photographer to get some nice shots without ANY moving lights dis-

rupting the subject in focus.

There are some prima donna photographers who will tell you they need the house lights on so they can focus. ANY decent Speedlite flash has a built-in assist beam, so no lighting is needed to focus; there's also a mode on your flash to give them light to focus. I can confirm that having the house lights on helps, but it's normally hogwash when people say it's NEEDED. Still, why fight it? A little bit of house lighting during the special dances will not hurt anything!

When introducing the cake cutting, remind guests that the space is reserved for the photographers to get the shots they

need, after they are done, the guests are welcome to take their own photos. Many cakes are set up in front of mirrors or windows, and the reflections of guests with cameras is NOT flattering. The couple will also be very distracted and not look in the right direction. Consider this for the return-to-altar shots (photos after the ceremony) as well.

Speaking of RTA photos, and especially if it's outside, bring some water to the bride and groom AND photographer. Remind guests lingering or slowing down the process that the party has already started in the reception room OR announce that you need everyone inside, as you will be lining up the wedding party shortly. Basically, get people to leave the photographer and wedding party ALONE.

This is common sense, but ALWAYS keep the photographer in the loop. Use 20, 10, and 5 minute intervals and ALWAYS check with them the moment of. When a photographer disappears, it's not due to incompetence but usually wedding guests and the couple pulling them aside to get photos of this person with that person.

When setting up the bouquet and garter removals and toss, and even the Anniversary Dance, ask the photographer if they have a preference on po-

sition (AKA stage blocking). You may not realize that putting the bride against your bright Source 4 monogram projector will create a terrible backlight effect on photos.

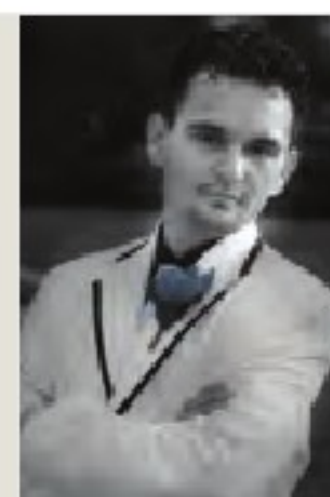
BE CREATIVE! If I have a monogram projected on the floor, I mark a spot with a small piece of tape. This spot shows the couple where to start their first dance, and it allows the photographer to get a nice photo of the couple dancing IN FRONT of their monogram.

Last, but not least, line up the wedding party so they are the backdrop of the first dance. Photos look MUCH better this way. Remind them to look at the couple at all times. No hands in pocket, no chit-chat, and no stupid faces.

These few tips will make the photographer LOVE you. I can guarantee that! Your job takes on a whole different vibe when you realize that the mood and ambience that you as a DJ and MC create will be captured forever in the couple's wedding photos. Try your best to make everyone's job easier and your WOM between

vendors will grow exponentially! Should you have any questions about photographers VS DJs, feel free to contact me anytime. **MB**

Arnoldo Offerman specializes in youth events, and is the driving force behind 4 Schools Only, a new division of A Premier Entertainment, in Central Florida (Tampa, Orlando). In the last year, the company has more than doubled its number of clients and their average fee. Find out more at www.4schoolsonly.com, www.apremierentertainment.com and www.arnoldoffermand.com.



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"DJ's Have Found A Summer Home!"

Stepping OUT of the Spotlight

WHO'S REALLY THE STAR OF
YOUR EVENT?

BY MIKE "DR. FRANKENSTAND" RYAN •

Trivia question: What was the very first video to be aired on MTV when it debuted at 00:01 hours on August, 1, 1981? Answer: "Video Killed the Radio Star" by The Buggles. It was also the first video to be played on MTV Classic in the UK and Ireland.

I played that song on the radio in the '80s, which was about the last time anyone asked me what radio station I worked for when I mentioned I was a DJ. The designation "DJ" has been so diluted of late, it makes one wonder why any DJ would consider themselves a "star." One client actually called me "just a record player."

It's our nature to be brag about ourselves, especially when a client shows an interest in us, but personally, I have to constantly remind myself who real "star" is. This becomes even more critical when interacting with newlyweds. And yet given the opportunity, I'll be the first to admit I can quickly be off and running (at the mouth) in describing my DJ exploits. It's a hard habit to break. My mantra has now become: The guest is always the STAR and the most important person. Period.

I'm not the star of the show—even though the folks attending will know there's a professional behind the mike—the guests are the stars, I'm primarily there to hold the spotlight on them.

~ Ron Jones, Allegro Entertainment

Recently while helping a couple plan their wedding reception the husband-to-be confessed that they had spoken to another DJ after their first meeting with me. However, they choose me over the other guy because "All he did was talk about himself," whereas I seemed sincerely interested in them. I felt for the unlucky DJ as I too, like impulse buying, have often slipped into bragging about myself. It's so easy to do, but oh so deadly. Ours is an ego-driven business and any good DJ knows he's the best DJ in the world—I know I am. You are too, right?

Here's a learning experience that made it clear to me who was the real star. I was once interviewed by a radio station general manager and after I bored him with my life story. He ended the conversation with a "less about you and more about me" moment. I took that to heart and at the next job interview I nailed it, beating out another DJ with a much better radio voice than mine. Unfortunately the other candidate was focused on his salary and not on the radio station.

Most sales people...talk too much. Many times a salesperson will talk his client out of the sale by overloading him with information he did not require to make a buying decision

~ Dave Ramsey

(financial advisor/author)

Often I am asked if I want to be located my equipment center stage. I politely decline, stating that on the side of the stage is fine with me, adding that I am like any other vendor who are there to attend to the needs of the client and guests; to be heard from but

not necessarily seen. The last thing I want to do is steal the attention away from a client—especially a bride and groom. I think this is what separates a pro from the dreaded cheesy DJ.

I used to think the so-called “wedding story” presentation was an interesting concept, especially with a hefty price tag attached to it. And who wouldn’t want the opportunity to perform in the spotlight before a captive audience. I used to get so carried away at weddings that before each reception activity I would elaborately explain the traditions behind them. Then I saw myself on video and it changed my opinion of myself as a DJ “star.”

While it’s a normal thing to be proud of your accomplishments, talent and equipment, the real pro should always ask “What can I do for my clients”? What can I do to make the wedding run smoothly or make the business award party more fun? What can I do to XCX—exceed customers’ expectations? What can I do to make the client the envy of all their friends?

Like most people with credentials, I like to add my accomplishments and titles after my name in correspondence with potential clients. However, I recently asked myself do my clients really care, or do they think I am a braggart? I have a friend who adds all kinds of accomplishments after his DJ name. With his permission I have included some of the titles he lists:

- Certified Professional Bridal Consultant
- International Public Speaker, Entertainer & Author
- Professional Master of Ceremonies
- Professional Wedding Entertainment Specialist
- Ordained Officiant - Non-Denominational
- Lighting Designer
- American Association of Wedding Officiants - Member
- Wedding Specialists of XXXXX – Owner
- American Disc Jockey Assoc. XXXX Chapter, Founding President
- Assoc. of Bridal Consultants - Member
- XXXX Disc Jockey Association - Member
- National Association of Catering Executives – Member

Admittedly, these accomplishments are quite impressive and he should be proud. However, I have to wonder if it isn’t intimidating to someone looking for a DJ. Might some potential clients assume that this DJ is too expensive?

We all have every right to be proud of our success, but as a client once told me all she wanted in a DJ was one who would “listen to me and do what I really want.”

By the way, Video Killed the Radio Star also became the millionth video to be aired on MTV February 27, 2000. The video was also the last video to be played on MTV Philippines before its shutdown on February 15, 2010 at 11:49 PM. **ME**

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Uplighting Done Right

ILLUMINATING AN EVOLVING TREND

BY MICHAEL EDWARDS •

“Do you offer uplighting?” a bride asked me in 2008. “I’m sorry, we don’t,” I replied.

After turning away several brides who were interested in adding uplighting to their DJ packages with us that year, I decided to investigate whether I should invest in it for my DJ company. At the time there were only two or three dedicated uplighting companies who offered high-quality uplighting in the Boston area. A couple of other DJ companies I knew of also offered it. Joe Toto’s Groove Entertainment was clearly the best of the bunch.

Back then there weren’t even a lot of battery-powered, remote-controlled LED uplights to choose from on the market. Fixtures were \$400-\$500 each, so very few DJs had made such a heavy investment. Did I really want to drop \$12,000 or more on another possible fad? The game show

system I bought back in the ‘90s, with its massive podiums, microphones and buzzers, was never as popular or “in demand” with my clients as I had hoped it would be. Karaoke also peaked for a while and then faded for us. The “props, costumes and games” DJ phase had also given way to the classier DJ style now widely preferred by most of our clients. Would uplighting also come and go as just another passing phase? How much should you be willing to invest when the public demand may end in a few months or a couple of years?

There is yet another factor to consider whenever the public creates a demand for any new service that DJs will be offering: The inevitable DJ pricing war that will soon follow cannot be overlooked. This can hurt any new product when cheaper versions of a higher quality product eventually become available and thus allow anyone to “buy in” for little investment and start offering a lower price than those who’ve in-

vested in the more costly real thing. After a while, low-end product will also “water down” the public’s image of the product overall. “Oh yeah, we saw uplighting at a party last week at the Elks...and it wasn’t very impressive.” Maybe it wasn’t real uplighting, or it was being poorly applied. A red light bulb “pointed up” from the floor is not uplighting.

STATE OF THE ART

There’s a skill and an art to décor lighting. Being a DJ, I was not fully aware of this, even after I purchased our first 20 uplights. Luckily, a former bride of ours with a degree in theatrical lighting design called me a couple of weeks after I did her wedding and asked about a job with us. She has helped to educate us over the past 18 months and now manages our new uplighting division. Our uplighting business has grown to over 100 wireless remote uplighting fixtures and 6 talented, degreed,





professional lighting designers on staff. The buzz created by pictures of our uplighting posted online has been spreading, and we routinely get emails from DJs all around the country who ask what type of lights we use. All of the photos in this article are samples of our uplighting, which was "The Knot 2012 Best of Weddings" pick in Boston this past January.

If you're a DJ thinking about adding uplighting, I'd suggest spending time to research all the available uplighting options and then buying the very best quality lights you can afford. Next, become as good at creating room ambiance with light as you are at creating excitement and energy with music. Hire good lighting techs and pay them well. Most DJs have felt the frustration of how everyone thinks they're a DJ and that anyone can do what we do behind the DJ table. Don't apply the same mistaken logic to lighting design. Most folks think that plunking lights around a room on the floor is also easy. But buying the least expensive lighting fixtures available and then putting them down "wherever the plug is" will not have customers beating down your door to reserve your uplighting services.

The familiar names in the DJ lighting industry (Chauvet, American DJ etc) are now all on the uplighting bandwagon and before long uplighting will probably be offered routinely by most DJs, floral decorators and even by sound companies. In greater Boston, even local function venues are suddenly adding various levels of uplighting. A couple of hotels have outdated, dangerously hot, plug-in par 38 cans with colored gels randomly strewn around the room. I recently counted three such lights in a hotel function room of 180 guests! The bride had

told me she didn't need our uplighting because uplighting was "complimentary" at the hotel. Their excuse for "uplighting" was worth exactly what she paid for it. All three gels were a different color and the lights were continually being knocked over by the guests all night with nobody

from the busy staff even noticing or resetting them. A friendly word to venue managers: Please stick to food and beverage.

A local country club has just installed permanently wired, plug-in LED uplights as their only permitted uplighting option, charging roughly the same as a dedicated uplighting service might charge. They told a client of ours that it would be a \$200 surcharge if they wanted to use a different uplighting source. But a busy banquet manager with an uplighting remote doesn't have the time or the skill set to change the uplighting for a dramatic effect to accompany each formal moment all night. As a result, the unsuspecting client gets far less value for their money than they would hiring a dedicated uplighting service. Although I imagine a DJ with great multi-tasking skills could operate the uplighting and also DJ/MC an event, we prefer to use a dedicated uplighting designer and let our DJs concentrate fully on their own duties. The two employees work as a team and our clients rave about the results. The Gear We Use

The best products we know of in American-made uplights, by ColorMaker (www.colormaker.net), are fairly expensive to buy. Twenty battery-powered, wireless LED fixtures (PX250-60/D1210) with a pair of hand-held remote controllers (CM-T10-PRO) and a couple of 10-bank battery chargers (BT10Bank) are currently priced at close to \$14,000, with shipping from Florida. These uplights have 60-degree dispersion and, if properly applied, will really color a room as if you'd just painted it.

Less expensive par can LED plug-in fixtures don't look the same to us. The light dispersion width of most par can or round-shaped uplighting units seems to be much narrower (30 degrees or less) by comparison and that makes a big difference in coverage.

A dark room being lit with inexpensive, narrow-dispersion uplighting fixtures tends to look like it has multiple thin candle flames applied at 10-foot intervals with dark walls between them. Inexperienced



uplighting techs will often place the fixture right next to the wall. Although this certainly decreases the risk of tripping somewhat, it will also create a white "hot spot" at the base of the wall rather than the continuous, rich color of an uplighting fixture that has been placed and angled (focused) correctly.

DJs in the New England area should feel free to contact me if you'd like to use our top-rated uplighting & designers at

your events at a specially discounted professional DJ courtesy rate. Check out our photo gallery at www.getuplights.com. **ME**

Michael Edwards is the owner of AllStar Entertainment & UpLighting, located in Andover, MA. A member of the ADJA and the Mobile Beat Advisory Board, he can be contacted at 978-470-4700 or emailed at info@getadj.com. His company websites include: www.GetaDJ.com and www.GetUplights.com.



Summer's the Time to Gear Up for the Struggle

ROBBIE BRITTON AND THE ARMDJS SHOW: EQUIPPING DJS TO WIN

Back in 2008, Robbie Britton had a major brainstorm. He wanted to put together a summer conference for DJs. When he located the event in rural Tennessee, many treated him like the non-believers treated Kevin Costner's character in *Field of Dreams*. He heard a voice saying "If you build it, they will come." Well, Robbie didn't have such a mystical experience; he just got down to work. And wouldn't you know it: He built a high-quality educational/networking event for mobile DJs...and they came. *Mobile Beat* publisher Ryan Burger sat down with Robbie to get the full story on this growing DJs conference.

Ryan Burger: I'm here with Robbie Britton of the ArmDJs conference. Robbie, could tell us how the ArmDJs show differs from the national conference that we run, and a little bit about how it got started?

Robbie Britton: Well, the best way to explain it is to go back on the history just a little bit. I was at Mobile Beat—I've been going to Mobile Beat for 12 years now—and back in 2008 I was at the Mobile Beat conference and I was talking to some friends of mine about the fact that there are so many people back home that just don't have access to this sort of thing; they can't travel this far for whatever reason—meaning traveling from East Tennessee or the East Coast to Vegas.

And it was just like, you know what? It'd be great if we had something regional, something in our market that would make it a little easier. And it was a seed that was planted. Then the other part was, in my market there are so many guys I'd love to have hear Mark Ferrell's ["worth"] message. And this whole conversation that's in the hallway, different conversations going on after the seminars at Mobile Beat in 2008, was kind of what sparked the whole thing off and got me started.

Ryan B: Obviously you have the same kind of vibe that I do. I've brought out people like Mark Ferrell, Peter Merry and Randy Bartlett to Des Moines, just to reach the DJs and improve the market around us. I'm guessing there a lot of DJs in your neck of the woods who are just up and down on quality, and you want to help raise the bar. Right?

Robbie B: Yeah. I mean, I'm in a very small market. Greeneville, Tennessee, where I'm DJing...we've got 15,000 people. Now, within 30 minutes there are four or five other towns. And you've got the Knoxville/Asheville/Bristol region right there.

And these guys—you know, I was surprised to find out

when I came home from Mobile Beat how many people did not know what Mobile Beat was, did not know the national associations that are out there, who they were. They just do their thing in their little market and they never know any better. And looking back, that was me 10 years before that, before I went to Mobile Beat. Mobile Beat was kind of the catalyst that got me taking my business to another level.

So I just thought, getting the message that Mark was pushing at the time—that DJs should get what they're really worth—the original message was just something that needed to be heard in my market somehow. And I'm four hours from Atlanta, and he's hit that market. But getting guys to go four hours, the average DJ just wasn't going to do that.

So I'm like, let's bring it to East Tennessee. And I chose my hometown. I believe it's also about the relationships I had with local venues, and I'm like, let's make it happen here. And that's kind of how the whole thing got started; get Mark Ferrell in my market.

Ryan B: It is a regional show, but at the same time there are people that do travel from all over the country for it. How did that happen?

Robbie B: Well, first, when I decided to do the ArmDJs conference, I was talking to Mark Ferrell. He was doing a little tour and he was going to be in my market—or around my market, passing through my market, I guess I should say—in June. So that's why we chose June 23rd, the first year in 2008.

And just getting people to show up just to hear Mark, I was a little worried about that. So I created other value around it. And what I did was I brought in Jim Cerone, and his topic at the time was "the perfect host." And Scott Faver with interactive games—Scott's always a good draw for something like this. And then Larry Williams, doing the "changing public perception" thing.

So I put together this mix of speakers—of course, Dr. Drax from the American Disc Jockey Association, he spoke also about the national association. So we had this good mix of value that turned out to be, instead of a one-night workshop for Mark Ferrell, turned out to be an all-day conference. And it just kept growing from that.

And then I did my announcement in April—actually on April Fools' Day in 2008, I did my announcement for it—on the forums, and people were like, there's no way you put that kind of talent up in Greeneville, Tennessee. And they thought it was a joke. But then once the buzz started going, it just took off like crazy.

So people from Louisville, Kentucky were coming down; from Cincinnati; we had people from Florida coming in to play that first year; Nashville—Kelly Farmer and all those guys from Nashville coming up; a lot of guys from South Carolina,

Charlotte, that area, they were coming over. So it kind of blew my mind how the word got out pretty quick for a first-year event. Because they saw this lineup and they believed it was easily accessible for them in this region.

Ryan B: Wow. So tell me a little bit about how you've worked to take this to a whole other level with what you call 5.0. You're bringing in some national heavy hitters beyond just the DJ industry, aren't you?

Robbie B: Yeah. You know, and to get to that point, every year we kept adding more and doing different things and really stepping up the game, as we got more support from attendees and people that wanted to attend. It was a three-year plan originally; just three years, regional event, and go from there. And there's so many people coming in, and that was it.

I had guys coming from England. Last year I had a guy from Australia. I've had people fly in from California, Minnesota—literally from all over the country people are coming to this event now. I decided on a two-day format last year, and I brought in Michael Port. I wanted to go to a two-day format to give more value for those...from outside our market traveling in.

We did Michael Port last year and we had two different tracks. We brought back Todd Mitchem, and Mike Walter was brought in; Marchello spoke. And it was just a good mix last year, and it just naturally progressed. This year we're going to take it to another level. And as luck would have it—and a little bit of Twitter skill—I was able to secure Gary Vaynerchuk.

I'm pretty excited about this year's event. It's going to be a two-day format in Greeneville, Tennessee. And Gary Vaynerchuk is going to be speaking at a DJ conference.

Ryan B: All right. Tell us a little bit more about Gary and stuff. I've known of him but the average DJ does not. So give us a little bit of the lowdown on him.

Robbie B: Well, speaking off the top of my head, the basic history of Gary is that his family moved to America—immigrants—started working for the family's liquor store/wine store that his parents took over at some point, and Gary grew up in that store helping out with inventory, learning a couple of things, that sort of thing.

And he figured out early on that when he was a kid, trading baseball cards and stuff, that people like to trade things and they see value in things that they trade around and collect. And through his parent's store, he figured out that people liked wine—they liked to trade wine; they liked to buy wine; try new ones. And so he really cashed in on that—how can you monetize that and get more people to buy different kinds of wine, try wines and help grow the wine side of the business.

And when he became old enough to really get involved, one day he literally had one of my employees bring a Flip camera in and he just turned on the video camera and started talking about wine. And over the months he started getting more followers. People watched his wine reviews. He used Twitter and different social media to bring in the audience. He's big on communicating—not trying to scam the audience with—you know, sometimes we use social media all wrong...

So through his experience—not speaking in theory, but in

practical use—he used social media to build and grow their wine business to a multi-million-dollar business, and he did it by just flipping on a Flip camera and tweeting it and responding on Twitter. I mean, how awesome is that? And if he can do that, imagine what we can do if we learn how to use Twitter and Facebook, LinkedIn, a little better?

Ryan B: DJs by their nature are the technical—high school audio/video geeks. So we understand the technology; it's just using it in the right way is the big difference. In addition to Mr. Vaynerchuk, tell us who else is on the docket.

Robbie B: Well, we also have Jeffrey Gitomer—you know him—we have some certified speakers from his camp. Last year we brought in Patrick Henry. He's real energetic, little bit of a comedian kind of motivational speaker last year, kind of after wake everybody up. And he did such a great job that



I brought him back this year to speak on words that sell. And that's a new program that Gitomer's working on that he's got some of his speakers trained on. And I'm using that to build value, kind of help DJs with the sales process.

Rob Peters is coming in, talking about the mobile DJ marketing calendar. I'm not even going to try and explain that. We'll have bios on that on the website that'll explain it a little better. It's some concepts of marketing—marketing ahead of time, getting ready for what's coming up.

I've got a friend of mine that's got a hypnosis show in Gatlinburg, Tennessee that's figured out how to market and sell the show. He's in a market in Gatlinburg, the average person's in town about three days. So if he doesn't advertise, he's out of business in three days. So he's going to come in, talk about how to market to your audience and stay "top of mind" with people, because he's really grown his business and is selling out shows during the week and on the weekends in the Gatlinburg area throughout the year.

Also we have DJ P. DJ P has just won the Master of the Mix on BET, where they have DJs from around the country come in and compete. DJ P is kind of a traditional vinyl-type DJ; he's got the turntables and everything. He's not big on the whole Serato thing; he's more of a vinyl guy. But he's one of those guys that help originate the mashup.

He was known in vinyl—he was laying down two records and doing the mix for years and got that whole vibe and genre going. And he's going to come in and speak a little bit about mixing, also about leading a crowd, what his whole take on music—he's got a really interesting take on music. Plus I hope we can pick his brain a little bit about branding because he's a club jock that's now been on national TV and he's touring around the country. He's been on the BET TV tours and competed in different contests and stuff. He's a guy from small-town America that's made it big and I think we can learn a lot from him coming in.

Ryan B: Fantastic. Is there anything else you want people to know about the ArmDJs show, short of how to get a hold of you?

Robbie B: Well, there's a huge lineup. We're going to have about nine different speakers speaking this year. Oh, breakfast with the Game Master. Scott Faver's going to be in doing breakfast. Brian Brushwood—he's a magician coming in, going to be speaking about aweing the crowd, owning the room. You know, being a magician that can walk in front of an audience with just him and winning the audience over; there's something to be learned there.

I've just got a good mix of business and performance stuff that we're going to have in this. It's a conference that's made to touch on a little bit of everything in the business, from sales/marketing to the networking side.

We start the whole thing off with a party. We set up—it's



called the "Meet, Greet, 'n' Jam." And we did this the first year and it's been something we've done every year. And basically what we do there, we set up a full back line of band equipment—the drums, guitars, everything. And if you can play an instrument, get on stage and jam. And a lot of DJs have that music background, what they did in bands and stuff. Me, I have no talent at all when it comes to playing an instrument. So it just blows me away when I see these guys get on-stage and pick up a guitar. You know, in 30 seconds they sound like they've been playing together for years. So that's pretty awesome.

Then we do a little karaoke mixer one night. It's just a good vibe in small-town America. There's no big distractions. And when you come to this conference, you're going to be really—zone in on the conference and camaraderie and the good people there. It's always been a good mix of people and it's kind of humbling that it's grown to what it has now.

Ryan B: Well, tell us people who are interested in going to the show where to check it out, how much it costs. Give me that lowdown and then we're all set.

Robbie B: Okay. So you want to go to ArmDJs.com. A lot of people say "ArmsDJ"—it kind of sounds that way. But it's really ArmDJs. The reason we did that was kind of describing the area. It's the Appalachian Mountains, which are near here—it's the Appalachian Regional Mobile Disc Jockey Symposium. So that's where the whole ArmDJs thing comes from. It's ArmDJs.com. We've got a little countdown thing there, shows how many days to the big conference. Click on that and buy your pass. Right now if you click on that, the pass price is at \$259. But if you use the promo code "MBLV"—for Mobile Beat Las Vegas—you can save \$70 on your pass. The pass covers the two-day event and access to everything that's going on.

Oh, I didn't mention this. We also have sponsors that will set up booths. Northern Light Effects always comes; Eternal Lighting's going to be here; DJ Event Planner, just to name a few. There's quite a few—TriceraSoft's going to be here...So we have a few people. We don't have a big trade show. It's more of a small regional type of hallway-kind of trade area. But you get a lot of good one-on-one time with these guys and pick different things up about what they're doing.

Ryan B: Well, I appreciate the respect you show for *Mobile Beat* and your vibe off the thing. That's why we were excited about working with you when you contacted us late last fall. So let's get a crowd out to ArmDJs, and hopefully I'll see you guys all there. I'm going to try to get down myself.

Robbie B: Yeah. I hope you can. I think what you're doing out there in Vegas is so awesome. Twelve years and I can't—I'm already making my plans for next year and I can't see not going to Vegas. To me, it's been a big inspiration for what I'm doing out here in my little regional market. **MB**



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Double Vision

A DJ AND AN EDUCATOR, RYAN KELLINGHAUS HAS A TRULY UNIQUE VANTAGE POINT ON SCHOOL EVENTS

At Mobile Beat we're always looking for new perspectives on issues of interest to DJs and ideas that have an impact on the industry as a whole. In this interview, we talk with a DJ who is also an assistant principal and teacher. Ryan Kellinghaus, of Bracken County High School, in the Cincinnati area, brings unique insight—an insider's view, if you will—to the subject of DJs and school events.

Mobile Beat: Ryan, please share a little bit of your history, as a DJ and an educator, with our readers.

Ryan Kellinghaus: Well, I've been a DJ for about 20 years, and when I first started DJing I was just a solo operator; just independent, kind of a weekend warrior. I did business through word of mouth, friends, and referral. And after the first several years, I started working for talent agencies as a subcontractor, working for other companies...in the late '90s I actually took a partnership and ran a talent agency for several years. And I booked everything from bands and musicians and magicians and caricature artists to DJs; but primarily DJs...

...The reason that I left the business, as far as running the talent agency at that time, was because my wife and I had our first two [kids], and the lifestyle was just becoming a bit difficult. And I had a few different opportunities and started teaching and loved it—it was a passion. But I never stopped DJing. For the last 20 years I've always been a DJ. Whether I was running my own business or I was working for somebody else, I never quit.

So I continued to DJ and then continued to teach. And then I guess it was around 2003, I came to a crossroads where I was working with somebody who moved out of town...He was booking me, and then all of a sudden I lost that. And I could have gone to some other agencies and continued as a subcontractor or I could have just taken over the business and continued it. And I decided to take over the business and continue it.

At that time, there were just a couple other DJs who had been working with that company as well, and one in particular that continued to work with me. That was in 2003. And now, I'm at the point where...I think of us more as a cooperative than a company. But there's six of us: Brian, Tom, Avious, Jake, April, and myself, under the name 513DJ.

So I have a lot of perspective across the business, from being a solo operator to being an owner-operator. At one point in time, I had a couple of DJ systems that I had DJs come in and run, as opposed to subcontracting to a DJ who had his own equipment. So I've done a lot as far as how you can run a DJ business.

I knew that if I wanted to make 513DJ viable and continue to do it, I had to bring in other DJs who were experienced. It had to be a win-win situation. And really, the biggest reason

for me doing it was because as a single operator, it's very difficult to spend the kind of money that it takes as far as advertising and marketing and a website and everything that it takes to run a DJ business—a good, successful DJ business—



that you really need to get more income. You have to develop that. And the best way to do it is just to bring in experienced people and develop win-win relationships.

So I'm very, very open with all my DJs. I've got DJs who have been with me since the beginning. Tom's been with me since the beginning. And they're all professionals outside of the DJ business. For instance, Avious is a high school music teacher. And we all have different backgrounds. It's another thing I take pride in, is that I make sure people understand we're not a cookie-cutter DJ service.

But it's a cooperative of sorts. So I'm earning a commission off of every gig that I book for my DJs. I handle all of the sales consultations. It's become difficult, now that I'm an assistant principal, I'll admit. But I find that a lot of my customers are willing to meet with me on Sunday afternoons, so I do a lot of my sales meetings on Sunday afternoons. Just about every Sunday I've got at least two or three sales meetings. And then of course I stay very busy on Saturdays.

But I book the gigs and I make a commission. My DJs are happy; I'm happy...I make it very clear that there's no contractual agreement between me and my DJs as far as my expectation of them. At any point in time they can book events on their own. In fact, I encourage them to, because I want them to want to make more money and I want them to want to do things on their own.

I also tell them that they can work with other companies if they want, as long as they let me know if they are working with other companies so that I'm aware of it, because I never want a situation where I could be talking with a customer who's talking with another company who's also talking about the same DJ. What I've found is that none of my DJs do that.

I only had one DJ at one point in time that was doing that, and he quit doing it because he enjoyed doing business with me so much more and the way with my business philosophy and how we do things, that now he's just kind of solo with me. And I have DJs who will give their 513DJ business card



to a lead of their own. In other words, they like the fact that I handle the sales end of it. And we have a very nice website with biographies and testimonials on there.

M B: Bringing in your perspective from the other side of the school equation, what do administrators and teachers expect out of a DJ that maybe a lot of DJs aren't doing?

R K: Well, it's really tough sometimes to walk a fine line...First, I want to point out that probably 90 percent of the business that I do is weddings...it's still only a small percentage of our business. But I'll tell you from experience as a teacher and as an administrator and a DJ and a parent—I fall into all those categories—that it's tough.

Of course, the biggest thing on an administrator's mind is safety at the dance. They want to make sure that kids are safe. They're concerned about grinding and lewd dancing, and they're concerned about language in the music. And honestly, they're really concerned about the same things the chaperones and the parents are concerned about.

Now, teachers are a little bit different. Teachers are much more concerned sometimes, depending on the teacher you're working with...The teacher's the one who often does the hiring, because you've got a junior class sponsor or a senior class sponsor. And so a lot of times, the teacher is in charge of finding the DJ and they'll involve the students. And it's very im-

portant to them that the students have fun.

So the teacher and the students want you to play current music and they want you to play all the things that students want to hear; but at the same time you have to be really careful because you've got administrators and parents who are concerned about content and language and safety...

So you have to come into it prepared, with really good answers to those questions. You have to be prepared to say we use only radio-edited music. If you spin video, you have to say we go through all of our videos and make sure that the content is appropriate. And hey, if you hear a song that you don't like or you think is inappropriate, please immediately let me know and I'll mix into something else right away.

If you need anything throughout the night; if you need me to make a special announcement—if you feel like things are getting a little out of hand with kids, I'll make an announcement for you. I'm not microphone-shy. And if you want me to throw in a slower song or throw something in to kind of bring the energy down a little bit—which honestly as a DJ I hate. I can't stand when I'm at a dance and I've really got everybody going. I mean, that's why you're there, is to get the energy up and get everybody dancing, having a great time. And then you'll have an administrator or teacher come over and say, can you turn things down a little bit? They're getting a little out of hand.

But you always have to walk that line between making sure—because if the kids don't have fun—at the end of the night, if the kids don't have fun, they're not going to bring you back. Because they listen to kids. We listen to them. We listen to their complaints. If they get 10 kids after the dance come up and say, man, that DJ was horrible, they're not going to bring you back. The next year, they're going to look for someone else; but they're still going to have the same kinds of demands as far as the content and the same concerns.

M B: We've had that experience at some dances recently, that on the one side of the equation we weren't playing enough of the kids' requests, and on the other side of the equation we were playing too many of them. So it's that in-between level of keeping the kids happy but not playing music that's distasteful...

R K: Right. At the end of the night, the most important thing is was the customer happy, regardless of what event you're doing; whether you're doing a wedding or a club or a school or a corporate event. At the end of the night, was the customer happy?

And in this case, with schools it's not just "a" customer. Your customers are the kids as well as the teacher and the administrator. So it can be really tough to walk that fine line. Honestly, what you really have to do is you have to spend a lot of time... If you're subscribing to a music service, you have to make sure that you're subscribing to a radio-edited music service and there is absolutely no chance throughout the night that there's going to be a slip. You've got to make sure that you know your music well...

And then also, there are certain sing-along songs, you might want to ask the administration about. For instance, "Get Low" is a song that the kids will sing the original words, not the edited words. And so you've got bring those things up in advance.

A lot of schools will ask students for music requests and then send you a list, right? And I'm surprised sometimes at

the list that I get because it's so obvious that the teacher did not look over the list before they sent it to me. I mean, there will be songs—the name of the song alone should be an indicator—you know what I'm saying? And sometimes it's not always obvious that a song is definitely not appropriate—even if it's an edited version—definitely not appropriate for a school. But sometimes it's very clear. But it's important to go through the list...because a school or a teacher might send you a list and just assume that you're going to go through and take off songs that are not appropriate. And so it's important for you to really go through that list and not assume just because there's a song on that list that it's going to be okay to play it...

M B: Got you. You said all of your disc jockeys have their own gear and everything like that. How about your personal preference? Tell me what your tools of the trade are

R K: I use Serato, and that's what I spin video with...I used VirtualDJ in the past and there were a couple features that I liked. I liked the jukebox feature. If I needed to walk away and put it on autopilot for a minute or if I was playing dinner music, I still like that feature. And I'll actually open up both software programs when I'm at a wedding and use one piece of software for one thing and then use Serato for the rest of the night.

I use Serato. I spin vinyl. I've got a couple SL-1200s. And I use two Bose L1 systems with four subs. And I love to spin video. I just recently bought...a Denon MIDI controller that works with Serato and I've been really happy with that. [possibly DN-HC1000S] So I use that in addition to the vinyl. And I use a [Rane] TTM-57.

M B: Where do you see things going for you? I mean, you've got your "day job" but you've got obviously a very strong "night job" as well, so to speak. Which way do you lean; and what kinds of gigs are you aiming for?

R K: Well, honestly I had already made the decision a couple years ago. There have been six of us now for a few years. And

we have different price structures. When I send someone our rate sheet, I explain that rates are based on demand, availability, equipment, and experience, but it's mostly demand and availability.

And so I increased my rate partly because I really only want to be out a couple times a month. Being out every weekend is just too much—as a teacher it was too much for me; as an administrator it's even more difficult. On weeks when I have to do a wedding on Saturday and then I have my sales meetings on Sundays, it's about an 80-hour week for me, because there's always one or two nights each week when I'm after school to supervise something.

...But I've been really excited. I've had some great opportunities, especially over the last 10 years of my 20-year career. Over the last 10 years I did Drew Lachey's wedding and Jessica Simpson sang on my microphone, and that was pretty exciting. I got to spin with Bronson Arroyo. For a few years I was doing the UC Bearcat fan jams in Fifth Third Bank Arena. And that first year was pretty exciting because I got to spin right next to Bronson Arroyo with his band playing, and it was ESPN, and that was pretty neat...

...I was joking with somebody the other day. I said, I'm going to be this 60-, 70-year-old geezer back there spinning on my 1200s in the nursing home because I just enjoy it too much to give it up.

M B: Is there anything else you want the other DJs out there to know about Ryan Kellinghaus and your careers on both sides of the turntables?

R K: You know, if there's one piece of advice that I have, it's that talent is useless if not dependable. And it's the one thing that I come back with with all my DJs and even with my students, that work ethic part of it—showing up on time is late, and early is on time; having a good work ethic and coming through, and your word is your bond. And when you always come through on what you say you're going to do, you're going to be successful. **ME**




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Whitney Houston: Gone Too Soon

BITTERSWEET MEMORIES
OF A BELOVED DIVA

BY RICK ELLIS •



On February 11, 2012, barely 24 hours after returning from the Mobile Beat Las Vegas show, I got a text message from a buddy of mine "Breaking News: Whitney Houston found dead." I quickly jumped on the internet to see what was happening and it was confirmed, so I did what most were doing at that point... texting, tweeting and commenting on Facebook about Whitney's death. As I did, I thought back to the first time I saw Whitney back in the 80's when "How Will I Know" showed up on "Dial MTV".

Now I was full on into hard rock bands like Def Leppard, Motley Crue and Night Ranger, and yes, I can admit, a lot of pop bands too; however R&B and soul was not my taste. But there was just something about the song and video that drew me in. Fast forward a few years to my own wedding, and what song did we pick to play before the ceremony began...you guessed it "I Will Always Love You" from *The Bodyguard* soundtrack.

Whitney Elizabeth Houston was born August 9, 1963 in Newark, New Jersey to gospel singer Cissy Houston. Throw in her cousins Dionne Warwick, Dee Dee Warwick, Godmother Darlene Love and honorary Aunt Aretha Franklin, whom she first met in a recording studio, and with a pedigree like that Whitney was destined to sing. She started out in a gospel choir at the New Hope Baptist Church in Newark and quickly became a featured soloist. As a teenager, she spent time touring with her mother and performing in the nightclubs Cissy was booked in. At age 15 Whitney sang backup for Chaka Khan on "I'm Every Woman" a song she would cover herself in the '90s for *The Bodyguard*.

HOUSTON, WE HAVE LIFT OFF

The early '80s saw Houston focus on modeling, where she graced the covers of *Seventeen*, *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*, until she was signed to a recording contract by Clive Davis from Arista Records. In February 1985, with production help from Jermaine Jackson, Houston's debut album *Whitney Houston* was released with the lead single "You Give Good Love" peaking at number 3 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The follow up singles "Saving All My Love" and "How Will I Know" both hit number 1 on the Hot 100 and the video for "How Will I Know" was so popular it made Whitney the first African-American female artist put into heavy rotation on MTV. The final single from her debut, "Greatest Love of All," would also reach number 1, staying there for three weeks, and giving her three number 1 singles from her debut album. The album was the number 1 album of the year on the 1986 *Billboard*, charts making her the first female artist to earn that honor. All told, her debut album has sold 25 million copies worldwide.

Her sophomore release, *Whitney* was released in 1987, and the hits continued with four reaching the number one spot on the Hot 100. In 1988, Whitney was a featured performer at a concert honoring the then-imprisoned Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. She sang to an audience of 72,000 live, in London's Wembley Stadium, and probably more than 1 billion tuning in to the broadcast of the concert aimed at raising awareness of apartheid. On another world-wide stage, Whitney's "One Moment in Time" was the theme song for NBC's Summer Olympics coverage and went on to reach number 5 on the charts.

With American forces at war in the Persian Gulf, Whitney's per-

formance of "The Star Spangled Banner" at Super Bowl XXV was so powerful that it was released as a single and reached the top 20 on the Hot 100 chart, making her the only singer ever to turn our national anthem into a pop hit. The performance still ranks as number 1 on a list of the 25 most memorable music moments in NFL history. The song was re-released following the September 11 attacks, where it peaked at number 6.

In 1992 Whitney married long-time boyfriend Bobby Brown, and also co-starred with Kevin Costner in *The Bodyguard*, playing a pop star who is stalked by a crazy fan and hires a bodyguard to protect her. The film was wildly successful despite mixed reviews, buoyed, no doubt, by the soundtrack and the single which would go on to become her signature song, "I Will Always Love You." The song was number 1 on the Hot 100 charts for a record-breaking 14 weeks, and the album sold over one million copies during the week of Christmas 1992 alone. Whitney continued to act in popular movies such as *Waiting to Exhale*, *The Preacher's Wife* with Denzel Washington, and as the Fairy Godmother in a made-for-television remake of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Her last movie, *Sparkle*, is set for release in August 2012.

MEMORIES OF WHITNEY

I have chosen not to write about the later years of Whitney's life, her troubles with the law, drugs, divorce, personal and professional issues; enough has been written and broadcast about that. Rather than focus on the negative, I asked some fellow DJs to share their thoughts and memories of Whitney.

Larry Williams, DJ, Mobile Beat speaker and author of *Customer Service A to Z* writes, "I vividly remember the first time I heard Whitney Houston. The song was 'You Give Good Love.' I was so immediately mesmerized by the track, I remember calling several friends and telling them about this new singer that I was convinced was going to be a huge star. A couple of days later, the video debuted on MTV. To this day, what I saw and heard was a 'star quality' that is rarely seen in new artists! The attraction was three-fold. She had an incredible voice, she was



beautiful and she could act! The world would later come to realize these qualities in every facet of her career.

"I really enjoyed her unexpected vocal style and range. She was always known for never singing the same song the same way. This very animated vocal style was likely inherent from her Gospel roots. So when it was announced she would sing the 'Star Spangled Banner' at the upcoming Super Bowl, there were many people, including myself, who were wondering what her rendition would be like. At its core, music is defined by its melody. But

occasionally, some songs and artists are defined by their social impact. This was never more apparent than when Whitney Houston sang the National Anthem at the beginning of Super Bowl XXV in

1991. With America on the front lines of the Persian Gulf War, her rendition brought the country together in pride and solidarity."

"It is very sad to see an icon go so soon," writes Josh Yawn, author of *Hosting for DJs* and the host of *DJ Crash Course*. "Far too much talent wasted. Before her fall, she was a great role model, and I have vivid memories of her hosting the Kids Choice Awards for Nickelodeon several years in a row. But my strongest memories will always be how inescapable her

music was during her prime. My prayers are with her family."

Whitney Houston will live on through her music, her movies and music videos. At the peak of her career, she had something about her that drew you in; no matter what kind of music you preferred, you just had to watch and listen. That is how I prefer to remember Whitney, not for her scandal plagued final years but as the fresh young singer asking "How Will I Know," and for how I felt at my wedding when her signature song "I Will Always Love You" played to start the ceremony. Farewell Whitney, and thank you for sharing your gifts with us. **ME**

Rick Ellis is the owner and operator of Music Express Entertainment based in Merritt Island, Florida, home of Kennedy Space Center. He began performing on stage at age 6. While in college he toured Russia, Romania and Hungary as a featured soloist and dancer. He started his company in 2001 and specializes in video music parties.



Tips for Better Setups

A SMART SET-UP PLAN SAVES TIME, PROTECTS YOUR SPINE
AND MAY EVEN BOOST YOUR BOTTOM LINE

BY JIM WEISZ •



Sometimes I amaze myself with how quickly I can set up and take down my DJ system—and I don't even have to run around looking like one of those people in a time-lapse video. I do work quickly, but it's more about efficiency. Over 12 years of DJing has taught me a lot about how to efficiently set up and take down a DJ system.

Which I find particularly nice, since it means I don't have to arrive at the venue hours in advance or be there after the event longer than I have to be. I've heard from several venues that they appreciate how quickly I can load out, since it means they don't need to have someone stick around just to babysit me until I'm all packed up. So not only is it a benefit to me to be efficient, it can even help my business too.

GEAR TRANSPORTATION

For the first couple of months I was a mobile DJ, I hand-carried every single component into my events. How crazy was that! After a while, I upgraded to a \$40 handcart I bought at a local office supply store. It converted to lie flat, so I could pack my equipment onto it and bring it in with a few trips.

After using the less-than-adequate cart for a while, I upgraded to a Rock n Roller R12 cart. It was like night and day. It featured four pneumatic wheels, allowing me to navigate through just about any terrain. I love that the cart folds up very small so it can fit in my midsize SUV but expands out so that I can load-in for most weddings in just one trip! As a result, I love my cart and think it's a huge time saver.

THE ART OF PACKING

My DJ vehicle is a small SUV that I've had for about 18 months. It seems that each time I get a new car it is smaller than the last one. Since it is my DJ vehicle, I am always cognizant of the fact that it needs to be able to handle all of my gear. Fortunately, like just about all advances in technology, my DJ system continually gets more compact over the years.

With each car, the first few times I load and unload is trial and error to determine the best way to arrange it. Once I have

my system down, then I stick to it. After a few times, I can practically load and unload it in my sleep. Part of my routine includes packing the cart, and car, to minimize moving equipment around just to fit everything. For example, at the end of the night my stands are at the top of my cart. I take them off and they go on the ground. Then every item I take off my cart from then on goes right into the car—I don't have to put anything on the ground just to pick it up later to go in the car. Once everything is in, I pick up the stands and put them in last.

Having a clear plan for how you'll pack and being efficient about it can be a big time saver.

GEAR STORAGE

I use a slant rack for my main DJ rack. The main purpose of it is to make my system

would just plug everything in on the outside. It made my setup time even faster, but I grew tired of seeing cords coming from the side of the case (even though I hide them pretty well). So, I recently had a custom rack panel made. It is a 1-space panel that is mounted on the bottom space of my rack. Now, everything plugs right into that panel. I have connections for four powered speakers, two microphones, power outlets and USB. It has made my setup just as fast, if not faster, than it was before. The best part is it has cleaned up the look of my system even further.

I have all my cords in one 72 qt black storage tote from the Container Store. It is a very heavy duty tub that easily fits all my cables, headphones, and microphones. I have ample cables including hundreds of feet of extension cord and several back-

I don't know of any DJs who say they got into the business because they love to set up and take down equipment. It is definitely one of my least favorite parts of the business, so that's why I'm constantly looking for ways to be more efficient.

look clean and neat, but it's also how I store and transport my main components. My rack features a wireless microphone, mixer with built-in sound card, CD player/media controller and power conditioner. It is self contained—all I do is connect my speakers and power to it and I'm ready to go. I don't have to run power to any other racks or cases.

About six years ago, I had an SKB case customized to have all the connections I would need on the outside of the case. So, I almost never had to open my case—I

ups for each cable. I used to lug around an even bigger case with a ton of cords I never used. I did a spring cleanup a couple years ago and removed a bunch of cords, which not only lightened my load, but also sped up the setup process since I didn't have as many cables to dig through.

I try to keep my cables organized; with the cords I use the least at the bottom of my container. I also velcro all my cords and also have them labeled with how long they are. I make sure to coil all my cords very neatly so they lay flat and look nice, which helps with saving me from unnecessary taping.

I remember when I started DJing, I would sometimes transport my lights in the original boxes (I know, I know!). However, that too adds a lot of set-up time. So, be sure to put



Jim Weisz has been a DJ since 1999, primarily serving the wedding and school markets. Originally from Chicago, he relocated his thriving DJ business to Dallas in 2003. He used his company's web presence to effectively to re-establish his client base within a just a few months. Jim is a seminar speaker and also writes for MobileBeat.com on web issues. He can be reached at jim@discoverydjs.com.



everything in some sort of container—whether it's a flight case or even just a Rubbermaid tote. Just about anything will save you time over taking out of and put back into the original packaging.

MORE TIPS AND TRICKS

I switched to powered speakers in 2011, and one of my concerns was the need to run power to the speakers. My powered speakers came with power cords that were only about 10 feet long. I knew that wouldn't be long enough for most applications, so I bought some 25 foot cords. They plug right into my speakers and then I can run them to my rack for power or to a power outlet, whichever is closer. Most of the time, 25 feet is more than enough. So, instead of plugging one cord into my speaker and then an extension cord to get it power for a total of four cords, I only use one for each speaker, for a total of two cords.

Just as it has saved me time using the 25 foot power cords for my speakers, I also try to use cords that are the length I need for the XLR connection to my speakers. Same goes for using 15-foot power cords for my uplighting instead of the six-foot cords that came with them. Basically, I try to minimize running a power or sound cord to a component only to have to plug that into another cord. It cuts down significantly on the number of cords I have to coil and uncoil, which of course saves time.

Another way I have been able to shave some time off my setup was by getting a new computer with a larger hard drive. Previously, I had an external USB hard drive I plugged into my computer. That meant plugging the hard drive into my computer

and plugging the power in. My new laptop has a 750GB hard drive, so I no longer have the external hard drive. I also have a built in soundcard in my mixer, so I don't have to worry about an external soundcard either.

STAYING CONSISTENT

Using a lot of the techniques I've mentioned, I am usually able to set up in about 20 to 30 minutes. Again, that's not with me running around at a frantic pace. It's working at a good consistent pace and includes a good sound check. As you can see from the pictures, this also isn't just plunking down a couple of speakers down next to a table. This is setting up the system for optimal performance.

An often overlooked part of the process is staying consistent. There were a few times this year when I deviated from my routine for my takedown and I noticed it took me a good 10

What I do to optimize my set-up and take-down times should be completely transparent to my clients and their guests.

to 15 minutes longer. So, one of the best things you can do is develop a system that works for you and stick to it.

I don't know of any DJs who say they got into the business because they love to set up and take down equipment. It is definitely one of my least favorite parts of the business, so that's why I'm constantly looking for ways to be more efficient. I am also careful that I don't make changes that will affect the sound or the performance. What I do to optimize my set-up and take-down times should be completely transparent to my clients and their guests. If anything, hopefully it helps me give a better performance, since I'm saving time and energy before the gig. **MB**



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WHAT TO GET, HOW TO PUT IT TOGETHER

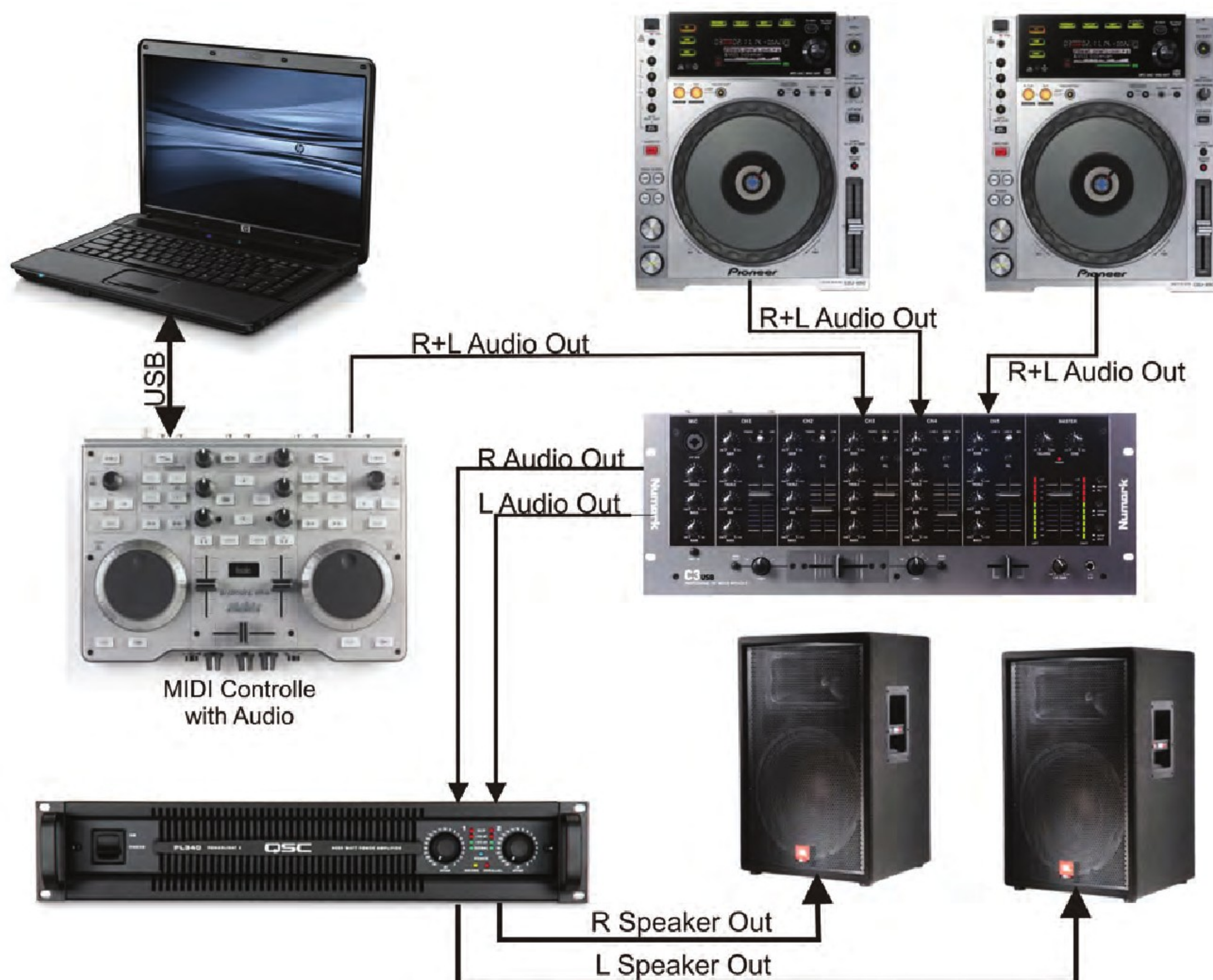
BY RICHARD MCCOY •

As an experienced CD or vinyl DJ, you've finally decided to jump onboard the digital music wagon. But you're not a computer person and have only basic knowledge about computers. You have a computer but only use it for email, web surfing, letter writing and a few other basic functions. Just the basics! Moving into the EDJ (Electronic Disc Jockey) arena can be a scary venture for you to undertake. Perhaps I can help...

DIVING IN, HEAD FIRST

There will be a large equipment investment of about \$1000 and hundreds of hours to rip and transfer your music library. You will also be required to modify the way you view and present music, videos and karaoke. EDJing is just another tool to enhance your show and satisfy your customers. As a computer engineer, I easily made the move to EDJing as a normal technology shift. It could be more difficult for others but the outcome will still be worth the effort.

The recommendations herein are based on my experience as a DJ and engineer along with some real, hands-on knowledge of equipment and software. There are many versions of this system,



so this will just be a basic point of reference.

Here are the minimum system requirements for EDJing:

1. Quality Laptop (Acer Model AS5560-SB613)	\$479.99
2. MIDI Controller (Hercules MK4 w/Virtual DJ)	\$149.95
3. System Case (ODYSSEY FZGSP12CDJW)	\$341.99
TOTAL	\$971.93

The above system assumes that you already have a mixer, CD player(s) and/or turntables and amp. They may not be of the same type/style used in this example, so please modify this configuration to match what you already have. This compact system allows the user to move easily from transport to stage in a little time. Since connectors and cables are the most common sources of problems, everything in this system is pre-wired for higher reliability and safety.

WORKING YOUR CONNECTIONS

The next BIG question is: How do I put this all together? It is easier than you think and you may already have the knowledge. Once completed, you shouldn't have to access the connections again. You may also have other pieces of equipment that you wish to incorporate into this system. That can also be accomplished easily.

Diagram #1 shows the most basic configuration common to most DJ equipment requirements.* You are welcome to substitute other equipment to meet your needs because the principles are always the same. Some may wish to replace the amp/speakers with powered speakers to reduce system complexity. There are also new MIDI controllers/mixers that combined the controller and mixer in one unit for a simplified system and smaller footprint. The use of a rackmount computer (as I described in my first column, in *MB*, January 2012, #140) allows for more computing power and storage.

Additional system requirements may include AC power connections, audio outputs for external amp/speakers, audio inputs for iPods, external USB disk, video outputs and microphone inputs. Just make sure you maintain access to your system for all these connections. The above configuration can also be adapted for turntables. Don't forget to "ground together" all your equipment cases to prevent hum and always use shielded cables for best audio quality.

With the power of the computer, new software and MIDI controllers, your abilities as a high tech EDJ will enable you to perform as never before. New opportunities will easily be filled, and the ability to adapt to multiple formats and system outputs will allow you to perform many different types of events with the same system.

If you have the funds and want the latest system available in the smallest footprint, invest in something like the system in Diagram #2. Cost: approximately \$3000.00 (including case). With the right DJ software, this system can do it all.

Now that you have a great working system, where are the music and videos? This can be the largest part of your investment in money and time in a new computerized system. I have over 100,000 songs, videos and karaoke files in my system and it took me years to do it all. However, with today's ripping software and the availability of MP3s and video delivery from music services, the job has become easier but still time consuming. While CD's are simple to rip, vinyl is more complex and may require more computer skills. (Look for a future article on this subject).

When everything is assembled, tested and ready for the pub-



lic, the next step is to insure that your system will present a clean and neat appearance to your customers. A nice setup makes you look good and will be more reliable.

If you have questions about your system, feel free to contact me. **MB**

* NOTE: The equipment shown in this article is for demonstration purposes only. MB does not endorse or recommend any of the equipment or manufacturers shown.

With his company A Sound Spectrum, Richard McCoy has been providing pro DJ services to the California Bay Area since 1966. He has served as a national officer of the ADJA, was a founder and officer of the ADJA's Northern California chapter, and is the founder and past president of the Bay Area Mobile Music Association (BAMMA). Rich is also a member and major contributor to the Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

Mac-Based Mixing Moves Forward

DJAY UPS THE ANTE WITH UNIQUE MIXING TOOLS

BY MICHAEL BUONACCORSO, JR. •

Algoriddim Software recently released version 4.0 of their popular DJ software for the Macintosh, dJAY. Boasting numerous improvements over previous versions, including a redesigned user interface, enhanced MIDI support, harmonic matching, and more, we decided to take it for a spin.

Like many other DJ software systems available on the market today, dJAY offers many of the features that have become standard in the past five years. This includes automixing with beat-matching, recording, looping, sound effects, and more. However there is one new feature that really sets dJAY apart from the competition:

automatically sync with all of your other devices the next time they are used. One can also send and receive live mixes from other DJs on a local network using Bonjour. dJAY also supports multi-touch gesturing on all of Apple's latest multi-touch trackpads. In fact, vinyl scratching can even be simulated using the trackpad. With Auto-Cut technology, dJAY automatically syncs the rhythm of a scratch with the tempo of the other song playing.

Another cool feature of dJAY is dJAY Remote. As an app that can be installed on an Apple iOS device, dJAY Remote turns an iPhone or iPod touch into a full function companion to dJAY. This is especially useful at weddings, where the DJ can walk from table to table, mingling with guests while cueing up their requests in real time. It can also be used to control the introduction music of the grand entrance from a remote location.

dJAY natively supports several MIDI controllers, including offer-

ings from Vestax, Pioneer, and Numark. The software also supports custom mappings of any MIDI controller using their custom mapping feature. While at MBLV.16, we had a chance to check out the Pioneer DDJ-ERGO-V, the first Pioneer controller exclusively for dJAY. The results were impressive. The controller interfaced seamlessly with dJAY. No lag, virtually instant response times, and an overall positive experience.

The software engineers at Algoriddim have clearly done a great job at packing the new version of dJAY with amazing features. The program is very Mac-centric, incorporating everything Macintosh users love about Apple and so much more. Our only gripe is that while dJAY allows the user to assign a pre-cueing channel, it can't output each channel independently. This means that unless you are using a MIDI controller, you are forced to use the software crossfader on dJAY. This is different than most DJ software programs which allow output of two independent channels to a traditional analog mixer.

We highly recommend dJAY for both new as well as more advanced DJs. It is simple and easy enough to use that beginners will be able to understand it quickly. Yet it is advanced enough to be used by seasoned veterans. But perhaps the most impressive part of dJAY is the price. At a MSRP of just \$49.99, it is literally a fraction of other comparable software offerings for DJs. Head over to the Algoriddim website, where you can get more information and download a free trial. **MB**



It's called Harmonic Match. We've written about the importance of harmonic matching before, and this is because it's a great way to set one's show apart by creating seamless mixes. By analyzing the computer's musical library, Harmonic Match intelligently detects a song's key. The software then allows the user to sort their music library by any specific key. The software also has the ability to change the pitch of the next song to automatically match that of the current song playing. In testing, this feature really worked well, accurately matching key and making it easy to create seamless transitions and mash-ups.

Not simply a Mac-exclusive program, dJAY is tightly integrated with the Mac operating system. One such example is iCloud integration, which allows changes to cue points or other metadata generated while using dJAY on one device (iPad, iPhone, or Mac) to

www.algoriddim.com

Laser Danger: Horror or Hype?

CUTTING THROUGH FOG TO FIND THE FACTS ABOUT HIGH-POWERED LIGHT

BY STU CHISHOLM •

Few topics in the entertainment world have more controversy and misinformation swirling around them than that of entertainment lasers. Maybe it's because the laser has been a staple of science-fiction weaponry since they were first invented in the 1950s. In the minds of many, the word "laser" is immediately followed by "gun." Even with the proliferation of lasers in everything from cat toys to carpenter's levels, this notion of a laser as something extraordinarily dangerous runs rampant.

My first laser experience was building a pulsed crystal laser in junior high school. A few of us science nerds assembled a basic power supply and flash tube, and then saved our pennies to buy at least four inches of laser rod. Everybody else got the usual ruby crystal rods, but at \$80 per inch, those were way too expensive on my paperboy's salary! Instead, I found a brand new kind of crystal called YAG (yttrium aluminum garnet) Neodymium, which ran \$80 for six inches. I also found one more helpful item: a rugged plastic thermos bottle. Glass thermos bottles were brittle, but I could get a band saw to cut off the end of the new plastic ones. Then I had a groove cut in it allowing me to mount the entire tube/rod assembly inside. This innovation would nearly double the output power, which was enough to punch a hole in a car fender in broad daylight.

I would later go on to build a 15-watt Edmund Scientific HeNe gas laser and an extremely "hot" carbon dioxide laser in Senior High. Before the '70s were over, I'd done everything from annoying my cat and making holograms with low-powered lasers right on up to cutting plate steel.

LIGHTING WITH CLASS

Laser output power and wavelength of light can cover a huge range, placing them into different classes. My first laser pointer was .5 mW (or a half-milliwatt). It was almost useless for an office presentation unless the room was darkened. Reddish-pink in color, this would be typical of a Class I laser, which carries no potential risk, even to the eye. These are found in things like laser printers and CD players. At the opposite end of the spectrum are Class IV lasers, which include surgical, engraving, drilling, cutting and welding lasers that fall outside the boundaries of this article.

I will stop here to say that nothing is absolutely risk-free! Even a modestly powered laser can cause eye injury if someone let the beam shine directly into the eye for more than a few seconds. The same could be said about any sufficiently bright light, such as a Surefire tactical flashlight running at about 180 lumens. Our strobes, Starballs, hazers and other lighting effects all carry risk depending on the circumstance. Like all of these things, lasers must be used judiciously; somebody must be in-charge and paying at-

tention! The safety studies I draw my information from also take into account the human blink reflex.

Moving on, Class II lasers also pose little danger, nominally requiring some 15 minutes or more of direct beam staring, which most humans could never tolerate, to cause actual eye damage! Any laser rated Class II and above is nonetheless required by law to carry a safety/warning label. The lasers most often used by DJs fall into the next step up; the Class IIIa category, and are limited to a total output power of 5 mW. (In fact, you'll note that many of these lasers cite their output power as "4.9 mW" so that they can fall below the federal variance requirements.) These lasers normally usually don't need any special permits or variances, because again, incidental beam exposure is fairly risk-free; it cannot normally be felt on the skin or burn a retina. For liability reasons, you will not find a single manufacturer that doesn't recommend aiming these lasers away from the audience, rather than firing directly into the crowd. That said, every DJ expo or lighting showroom I've attended since the first "spray" type lasers appeared in 2007 has had laser demos that have done just that!

To add a little confusion, the diode in these lasers may run several times higher than the "legal" limit, my BlissLight having a 30 mW diode. What makes them legal, though, is the special diffraction filter, which turns the single high-powered beam into dozens of smaller, spread-out beams of legal output power. (And a big reason why the companies who make such units discourage anyone from tampering with them.)

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NANOMETERS

So owners of said lasers are always caught in the dilemma; do I want the "Oooh!" reaction of immersing my audience in dozens of dancing laser dots, or do I want absolute, air-tight, unquestionable safety? Only you can make that determination! All I will add is that I have never found a single account of anyone losing his/her eyesight due to a Class II or IIIa laser, and have often demonstrated my confidence in the safety of my laser by shining it directly at my own eyes.

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As hinted at earlier, the wavelength of the light can be just as important as the actual output power. I once read that if humans could hear bass as well as they can mid-range, a bus idling a mile away would keep you awake at night! Just as our ears hear certain frequencies much

more efficiently than others, human eyes perceive the deep reds of 820 nm light as much dimmer than the emerald green of a 510 nm beam of equal power. At the higher end energies of borderline safe lasers, this can translate into a green laser being much less safe than a red one! In general, the 5 mW limitation keeps both colors, as well as the cool new blue lasers, well within the "safe zone."

DON'T LAZE ME, BRO!

Some larger entertainment lasers might fall into the Class IIIb category, running between 5 and 500 mW. These are the beasts that must never be aimed toward people, because even the reflection of the beam can cause instant eye damage! This is a very large class, though, and wavelength differences become critical. Some can be felt on the skin and even burn, while others can't be felt at all. Using these lasers can be tricky, because they must not only be aimed over the heads of an audience (federal regulations requiring at least 2.5 meters above audience "head level"), yet they also cannot be aimed skyward where aircraft can potentially fly! These are best used for big stadium shows, combined with fog or haze and contained in an indoor arena. If you're using these, you're doing

The Line on Lasers

Some of the sources for this article:

www.ppsfx.com/Laser_Safety/laser_safety.html

www.pangolin.com/resguide09b.htm

http://ehs.uky.edu/radiation/laser_fs.html

www.laserist.org/Laserist/Safety_7.html

X-Laser FAQs on variances/legalities:

<http://x-laser.com/variancefaqs.fwx?FAQ=Legal&X-Laser=v06W77977>

shows well outside the scope of the average mobile DJ anyway! (Congratulations!)

BUYER BEWARE

One disturbing trend I've noticed is the importation of ultra-cheap, no-name lights that I see offered on the Internet or being sold by word-of-mouth. Given the

economy and our budgets, a DJ can be forgiven for cutting corners to lay-in some new uplighting, but when it comes to lasers, I have one word of advice: DON'T. Some of these lasers, running well below the cost of the name brands, often don't even have the required power level tags and labels! If an officer who is informed about variance laws should happen to be at your event and takes note, you not only could lose your lighting, but be subject to a hefty fine as well. Even worse, we all know that governmental safety oversight can be quite lax in some countries, so the output power of your no-name laser could actually be different than advertised and/or harmful to your guests! Don't take that chance.

So what's the bottom line? As with all things in life, use common sense and use the tools available to your best advantage. Keep the high-powered lasers high and the low-powered lasers wherever you think they'll do the most good. Take every precaution to assure the safety of your guests and compliance with all laws and ordinances. Be the expert: know your gear and how to use it and you'll never have to worry about sacrificing "WOW" on the altar of fear. Until next time, safe spinnin! **MB**



Upgrade Your (Gear) Image

IS YOUR RIG PROJECTING THE RIGHT MESSAGE?

BY JOHN STIERNBERG •

Sound, lights, and special effects are essential elements in any mobile entertainer's stage rig. They are your tools of the trade. They are also part of the image that you project, and as such, make up a key branding element. Is your stage rig consistent with the image that you want to project?

Specifically, is the performance quality of your gear up to today's standards, or is it still rooted in the twentieth century? What can you do to upgrade without breaking the bank? This article addresses these issues and recommends three action tips for success.

THE HIGH DEFINITION ERA

Remember when bigger, flashier, and louder was better? Those days ended years ago. Your audiences today are influenced more than ever before by the consumer electronics and information technology worlds. Think about the so-called "four screens" in everyone's lives: 1) television, 2) computer, 3) smart phone, and 4) tablet. The quality is (at least) passably good, MP3-audio notwithstanding. The "high definition" metaphor has spread from flat panel digital televisions to whole-house wireless audio systems.

A related trend is the booming step-up headphone/earbud market. Consumers can hear the difference between the stock earbuds that come with a phone or MP3 player vs. the dozens of brands of better-quality upgrades. Your audience (and the people that book you) can relate to varying audio and video quality levels, more than ever before. They see and hear the difference between mediocre and "HD" quality.

This is a good development for mobile entertainers. Why? Because it presents an opportunity for you to use your sound, lights, video, and special effects to 1) wow the crowd, and 2) differentiate your act from your competitors.

UPGRADE YOUR SYSTEM TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

Still using those giant fuzzy speaker boxes and power-hungry lighting rigs? Are you tripping over mic cables? Are there hot spots and dead spots in the audience (too loud and bright for some people, too unintelligible and dark for others)? It may be time to upgrade. No, this isn't a sales pitch for the gear dealers and manufacturers. It's about differentiating your brand from your competitors.

Here are examples of simple and ultimately cost-effective things that you can do—and promote (assuming that your competitors haven't beat you to it):

- **Audio quality.** Fine-tune your system so that audio coverage is smooth, even, and controllable in the performance space. Make sure that your system is modular so that you can accommodate different sizes of crowds from gig to gig, without sacrific-

ing quality.

- **Eco-friendly.** Make sure your sound, lights, and even your transportation (car, van, truck) is in tune with environmental trends. Low power consumption, biodegradable packaging, and "no DJs were harmed during the manufacturer of this gear."
- **Wireless.** Other than getting AC power to sound gear and lights, you can make most of your system wireless (mics, headphones, control systems, etc.). The benefits include: 1) looks cleaner, 2) faster setup and teardown, and 3) better mobility for you during the show.

All of the above are promotable to your clients. Do your competitors offer HD quality sound and lights? Are they environmentally conscious? Are they in and out of the performance space quickly? Do they look good on stage? You can promote the differences to build your brand.

HOW TO USE YOUR RIG TO YOUR BRAND'S ADVANTAGE

What can you do right now? Does it have to be expensive? Here are three suggestions for how to upgrade your rig and build your brand cost-effectively.

Action Tip 1. Design the ultimate system on paper (description and budget) before making any changes. You likely own many of the right components already and won't need a completely new rig. Know what you have now versus your competitors.

Action Tip 2. Identify the gaps between what you currently own and your ideal system. Create a budget and upgrade plan that is both affordable and manageable from a time standpoint (e.g., you may need to rehearse with new equipment until setup, operation, and teardown is second nature).

Action Tip 3. Promote the differences. Your clients want to know about how you are going to assure a quality experience for their guests. Include descriptions of your rig on your website, Facebook page, and collateral material. Remember that clients do not necessarily relate well to long lists of equipment, but they do resonate with descriptions of the audience experience and testimonials from happy prior clients.

HERE'S THE POINT...

Your gear is both a set of performance tools and an extension of your brand. While you may need to budget time and money for an upgrade, the benefits are worth the effort.

Be sure to implement the Action Tips in sequence: 1) design the ultimate system, 2) create a budget and upgrade plan, and 3) promote the positive differences between you and your competitors in terms of overall presentation quality.

Next time we'll talk about scaling your equipment budget to your revenue plan and long-term strategy. In the meantime, best wishes for success in mobile entertainment in 2012! **MB**



John Stiernberg is founder of Stiernberg Consulting (www.stiernberg.com). His book **Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters** is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at john@stiernberg.com. You can find John on LinkedIn, Plaxo, and Facebook and follow him on Twitter.

Getting Training in Order —the Correct Order

BY JEFFREY GITOMER •

Many companies are considering training programs for the new year. New budgets. New needs. New opportunities.

And most companies will concentrate on “it.” Whatever it is. More sales, a new product launch, customer service, internal operations, diversity, or whatever is “pressing.”

All of that is wrong – or should I say, out of order. Before you train ANYTHING, before you launch any new program or initiative, ask yourself these two questions:

1. How positive are the attitudes of our people?
2. How attitudinally receptive will our people be to this training?

If the answer to “How’s our attitude?” is “Not too good” or “Inconsistent” or “My attitude is great, it’s everyone else’s attitude that’s the problem!” then the training will be met with resistance, and will fall short of your expected outcome. Way short.

The answer to this dilemma is very simple, yet it’s overlooked at most every company in the world: Train attitude first. Positive attitude. YES! Attitude.

Positive attitude is not a “program” or an “initiative.” It’s an imperative. It’s not the “flavor of the month.” It’s the feeling of and for a lifetime. Your lifetime.

Attitude is the mood of every employee. Positive attitude leads to positive productivity and positive communication.

Attitude is both foundational and fundamental. Attitude is foundational to all aspects of corporate productivity, communication, and harmony. It’s the basis for what is erroneously known as morale. It’s NOT morale—it’s attitude. Low morale is a symptom; poor attitude is the problem.

Attitude is fundamental to all aspects of job performance. How much more profitable would your company be if EVERY employee (including you) had the attitude of yes?

These days attitude is easily deteriorated. Cutbacks, budget cuts, over-tasked employees, poor leadership, lower profits, and increased pressure to “do more with less.” Yet attitude is virtually ignored by every company HR and training department. Why? It’s hard to measure the ROI. Pity.

You’ve heard the expression: Attitude is everything.

Let me break it down for you so you can have a better understanding of how “everything” attitude really is:

- Your attitude rules your mood.
- Your attitude rules your self-esteem.
- Your attitude rules your communication.
- Your attitude rules your interactions.

Your attitude rules your thought process.

Your attitude rules how you perceive things.

Your attitude rules how you perceive people.

Your attitude rules how others perceive you.

Your attitude rules your service.

Your attitude rules your sales.

Your attitude rules your career.

Your attitude rules your family.

Your attitude rules your life.

In your business, your attitude rules your sales, your service, your communication, and internal morale. And at the end of positive attitude in your business is a ton of referrals and a great reputation.

Pretty important, huh?

Well, if your attitude is so important, how come you don’t spend 15 minutes at home each morning building it? Or 15 minutes in the morning when you get to work? What are YOU doing to ensure that every employee gets a daily YES! message?

Here are a few more attitude insights:

- Attitude starts at home with your family.
- Attitude is personal. It’s not about other people or other circumstances. Attitude is ALL about you.
- Attitude is selfish. You do it for yourself FIRST. Then and only then can you give it, or pass it along, to others.
- Attitude is a choice. You are ALWAYS free to choose: How you give value. Doing what you love. Having the right attitude.
- Attitude is a gift and a blessing—self-given and self-imposed. And it is my greatest hope that you discover that truth and bless yourself forever.

Maybe it’s time to invest in attitude training. **MB**

Attitude is a choice. You are ALWAYS free to choose.



Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of *The Sales Bible*, *Customer Satisfaction is Worthless—Customer Loyalty is Priceless*, *The Little Red Book of Selling*, *The Little Red Book of Sales Answers*, *The Little Black Book of Connections*, *The Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude*, *The Little Green Book of Getting Your Way*, *The Little Platinum Book of Cha-Ching*, *The Little Teal Book of Trust*, *The Little Book of Leadership*, and *Social BOOM!* His website, www.gitomer.com, will lead you to more information about training and seminars, or email him personally at salesman@gitomer.com.

How Guerrillas Economize

BY JAY CONRAD LEVINSON •

When guerrilla marketers think of economizing, they don't necessarily think of trying to save money. What they do think of is getting the absolute most from any money they've invested in marketing. They realize there are two kinds of marketing—expensive and inexpensive—and they know that expensive marketing is the kind that doesn't cover the investment they've made in it, while inexpensive marketing pays rich rewards for their investment. Guerrillas have the insight to know that economizing has nothing to do with cost; it has everything to do with results.

To be sure, guerrillas adopt a philosophy of frugality and thrift. They know well the difference between investing in something disposable such as paper and accounting services—and investing in something that's truly an investment, such as a telephone system or customer-tracking software—items they'd use on a daily basis. There's a big difference in these two expenses, so you won't be surprised to learn that guerrillas rarely waste their time and effort on relatively low cost disposable purchases, but are willing to expend the time and energy to enjoy a large savings on an expense that's really an investment in disguise.

A key to economizing is to think not in terms of purchasing, but in terms of acquiring. That means you open your mind to bartering, sharing, renting, modifying an existing item or borrowing it. It means possibly learning a few skills so that you can do rather than hire. Desktop publishing software enables you to save a ton of money usually paid to pros.

Guerrillas are also keenly aware of when it makes sense to hire a pro, knowing that amateur-looking marketing is an invitation to disaster. They might hire a highly-paid professional designer to give their marketing items a powerful visual format, then use their own staff members or themselves to continue generating marketing materials that follow this same format. They learn from any consultant they hire.

By understanding that economizing does not mean saving money, but investing it wisely, guerrillas test their investments on a small scale before plunging headlong into any kind of marketing. They have

no fear of failure, providing the failures are small ones and knowing that even one success in ten tries means discovering a path to wealth and profitability.

They know in their hearts that money is not the key to happiness or success, but that enough of it enables them to have a key made. Real frugality is more about priorities and results than just saving money.

Of all the methods of wasting money and not economizing, the number

one leader in marketing is failure to commit to a plan. Untold millions have been invested in marketing campaigns that had everything right about them except commitment on the part of the marketer. Guerrillas know that it takes time for an investment to pay off and instant results are rarely part of the deal.

Abandoning a marketing campaign before it has a chance to flourish squanders money in three ways. First, it means all prior investing in the campaign has been for naught. Second, it means new investing will be necessary to generate the share of mind that precedes a share of market. Third, it means creating new marketing materials all over again.

Small business owners have other ways to waste money as well. Many of them invest in research instead of doing it themselves. Others dare to commit to a campaign they haven't tested. Still others create marketing materials that must be updated regularly, rather than creating timeless

marketing materials. When you say in a brochure that you've been in business five years, you must update that brochure next year. When you say you've been in business since 1995, that's always going to be the truth.

High on the list of ways that small business marketers waste precious funds is their proclivity to invest in amusing marketing, funny marketing, even uproarious marketing. Marketing has an obligation to put money in your coffers, not smiles on the faces of your prospects.

The most common method of economizing is also one of the most overlooked—marketing to existing customers. It costs one-sixth as much to sell an item to an existing customer than to sell that same item to a non-customer. The price of discovering and convincing likely customers is astronomical when compared with the price of doing the same with current customers. Database marketing has lowered the cost of guerrilla marketing and yet some business owners fail to even try to make repeat sales.

Guerrillas avoid buying what they want and don't really need, don't fall prey to slick salespeople representing new and unproved marketing tools, avert bad decisions by not making quick decisions, and constantly ask themselves—"If I didn't need this yesterday, why do I need it today?"

Economic errors often made by entrepreneurs are failure to negotiate, comparison shop or use the net for pre-purchase research. They don't know exactly where every one of their dollars are going and don't know that the leaner their spending today, the fatter their cushion tomorrow. **MB**

Guerrillas have the insight to know that economizing has nothing to do with cost; it has everything to do with results.

Jay Conrad Levinson is the author of the modern business classic, **Guerrilla Marketing**, which has become a landmark book in 62 languages. Small and large businesses alike have applied the principles of *Guerrilla Marketing* because of their simplicity, common sense, and proven track record. 20 million copies of **Guerrilla Marketing** books have been sold worldwide, and the many universities now include the concept in their MBA programs.



Music for a Cause

A LOOK AT THE BROADER POWER OF MUSIC TO BRING CHANGE

BY MIKE FICHER •

Peter Yarrow, Mary Travers and Noel Paul Stookey sang about “the hammer of justice,” “the bell of freedom” and “the song about love between my brothers and my sisters, all over this land,” many times, as their version of Pete Seeger and Lee Hayes’ “If I Had a Hammer” rose to number ten on the *Billboard* national pop singles chart.

But, one particular performance, on one particular day was different. It was not in trendy Greenwich Village folk club or the friendly confines of a coffee shop in another Northeast city.

The date was August 28, 1963; the place was the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the Mall overflowing with people, on an 84-degree day in Washington, DC. Dr. Martin Luther King was about to deliver one of the most stirring and famous speeches in history: “I Have a Dream.”

“For everybody, it was transformational,” Peter Yarrow recalls with a tone that suggests the memory is as vivid as if the event happened yesterday. “When you stand there with a quarter of a million people who are saying the laws of the government of the United States are unjust, it’s a powerful moment to say the scales had better fall from your eyes, that you had better see what is going on.”

“You cannot say ‘liberty and justice for all’ without being a hypocrite. There was hardly liberty and certainly no justice for all African-Americans in America.”

“We realized that by being there together and singing there together, we were united in spirit and commitment; we would stay the course and not be dissuaded from our purpose in the long haul.”

Time has done nothing to dull Yarrow’s lifelong social activism paradigm. “The ethic behind songs of conscience doesn’t change, even though the issues are altered from generation to generation.”

While Peter, Paul and Mary

enjoyed tremendous pop success in the 1960’s, charting 19 singles between 1962 and 1969, including one *Billboard* #1 hit and six top 10 hits with songs significantly treading folky and socially conscious grounds, mobile entertainers are not likely to play their music.

However, Yarrow, who, in his seventies, continues to entertain to this day (Mary passed away in 2009 and Paul also performs solo) illuminates the possibilities of an entertainer who seeks to make difference in greater society rather than just grab another headline or another dollar, or to bask in the filtered light of past glory.

Through his music, his organizing prowess and his presence, Yarrow has worked tirelessly over the last five decades for a myriad of causes including hunger, homelessness, the nuclear threat, education, equal rights, arts in the classroom, Holocaust remembrance and, most recently, respect amongst our youth.

“Generally, what happens in our world, a movement or a perspective evolves and then songs are written to personify it.

“In this case, a movement began with a song,” Yarrow offered. This time around, the song that spurred Yarrow to act is “Don’t Laugh at Me,” written by Steve Seskin and Allan Shamblin.

“When I was at the Kerrville Folk Festival about fifteen years ago, my daughter Bethany said ‘Dad, you’ve got to hear this song. It’s amazing. Last night, Steve Seskin sang it at the campfire and when he finished everyone said ‘sing it again.’ That never happened before.”

“When I heard the song, just as she had predicted, there were tears rolling down my cheeks. I was terribly moved.”

So moved that Yarrow not only shared the song to his singing partners, Mary and Paul, he started Operation Respect. Founded in 2000, the non-profit organization brings to children, in schools and camps, a curriculum of tolerance and respect for each other’s differences.

“We have to turn our kids into kids who grow up to look at things through the lens of positive, non-conflict resolution, through the lens of valuing themselves for something intrinsic rather saying, ‘I’m important because I have a lot of money and my parents have a lot of money.’ We must do this.”

While some may see Operation Respect as an anti-violent or an anti-bullying program, Yarrow says, “The real heart of the program is to create a little society amongst the children in which they can be accepting of one another. In that kind of an atmosphere, we can grow children to break the cycle of hatred, of fear that feeds this incessant chain of abuse that leads to mean-spiritedness and a fractured society, to aching hearts and to war.”

With each concert, Yarrow seeks to build a little community within the guests. “When people attend my shows, they’ll hear about pieces of this history as it relates to the songs and they’ll sing together.

“If we sing ‘Puff the Magic Dragon’ together, it’s a delight. If we sing ‘If I Had a Hammer,’ it’s joyous and affirmative.”

Just like that day in 1963. **ME**



Mobile DJ, dance instructor, emcee, voice actor, writer, teacher, and improv comedian, Mike Ficher owns and operates Dance Express, based in Bend, Oregon. A three-time presenter and host at Mobile Beat conventions, Mike has been expanding the public’s definition of mobile entertainer since 1986.

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Building a Better “Box”

ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE SHAPE OF YOUR BUSINESS

BY JASON WELDON •



A few years ago, heck maybe quite a few years ago, people wanted you to “Think outside the box”. Thinking inside the box was typical, and we all had to figure out a different way to approach the daily things we did. Nowadays I have to laugh, because if everybody is supposed to think outside the box, to be different, shouldn’t we now be thinking inside the box? Anyway, I digress.

Before any of us can think inside or outside “the box” we have to think about the box itself! We can’t think about cool ways to do things, neat new services to provide, or fancy slogans, if the basic foundation of our business is built with flimsy, haphazardly created values and core beliefs. Trying to start or grow a business before you really think about the way you want to run your business will prove a very challenging journey.

Creating your box doesn’t have to be hard. I think you simply need to answer a few key questions—but they will require some serious thought. The

answers to these questions will help you build your core, or foundation: a foundation that you can rely on and use to grow your business. Some example questions would include:

What is the common goal of your business?

What are your values as a business? Or, what is your company culture?

What is it that you really do?

Why do you want to do it?

Why are you different?

Thinking outside or inside the box is “how” you are going to act upon the answers to the above questions. When you take the time to answer these questions, as well as some others, you start to work ON your business and not IN your business. You begin to see your business from a 10,000-foot view—which is usually how your customer sees it. The more you can hone in on the answers to those questions, the more you can focus on how you can be different and how you can get your message to your prospects and clients.

For example, if you don’t know what

you value as a business, how can you possibly find the right client to market to? As a DJ, you may want to value honesty, because, to you, it is important that you are always completely honest with all your clients. This value of honesty will help you make particular business decisions, like never promising one DJ and then sending another. Or never changing the contract once particular things are agreed to. And these days, honesty would be a great value to try and convey to your prospect.

Another example answer could be to the question, “Why do you want to do this job?” The answer to this question really defines you and your business. If the answer is “for fun,” then you have a whole different box to create than someone who answered “establish a company with 10 DJs over the next 3 years.”

Whatever you do, don’t let other people choose the type of box you want to create. Sure, you can allow certain key people to influence the creation of your box, but only you can have the final say on how you want to do things. These are decisions you have to make, and as long as you stand behind your decision, no one can tell you’re building your box the wrong way!

So what does your company’s box look like? **ME**

Jason is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.



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